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Scotland's Castles

rescued, rebuilt and reoccupied, 1945 - 2010

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# Scotland's Castles: rescued, rebuilt and reoccupied, 1945 - 2010

Janet Inglis

2011

University of Dundee

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**Janet Rose Inglis**

**Scotland's Castles:  
Rescued, Rebuilt  
and Reoccupied,  
1945 – 2010**

PhD University of Dundee July 2011

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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AHSS – Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland
DIY – Do-it-yourself
HBC – Historic Buildings Council
HHA – Historic Houses Association
HS – Historic Scotland
MSP – Member of the Scottish Parliament
NGO – Non-governmental Organisation
NTS – National Trust for Scotland
RCHAMS – Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
SCA – Scottish Castles Association
SNP – Scottish National Party
SPAB(is) – Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (in Scotland)
V&A – Victoria and Albert Museum
WW2 – World War Two

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 Michael Davis, historian and author  
 Peter Drummond, architect  
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 Nigel Turnbull, amateur historian of Torwood  
 Professor David Walker, former Chief Inspector, HBC

## DECLARATION

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have consulted all references cited, unless otherwise declared. The work of which the thesis is a record has been done by me and it has not previously been accepted for a higher degree.

Janet Rose Inglis, Candidate

I hereby declare that the conditions of the relevant Ordinance and Regulations of the University of Dundee have been fulfilled in the preparation of this thesis in order that it may be submitted for the degree of PhD.

Charles McKean, Professor of Scottish Architectural History

## PREAMBLE

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Research topics usually spring from personal interest, and this is no exception. In July 1997 I had been holidaying at Portpatrick on the Mull of Galloway with my husband and daughter and we were on our way to stay with family in Dumfries. We had started out the drive with no thought of buying anything more than a lunchtime sandwich, when we saw the 'Ruined Castle for Sale' sign on the A75. To cut a very long story very short, we bought the place and in 2006 we finally finished rebuilding Barholm Castle.

After years of involvement, I was suddenly bereft of castle-related activity and decided to plug the gap with research that I hoped would yield deeper insight into many aspects of the rebuilding of Scottish castles, including the personal motivations of individual owners. As a psychologist, I find this an endlessly alluring aspect of the topic. My personal interest, although providing a deep well of fascination, might also be a kind of a hindrance. If impartiality is the Holy Grail of the academic study of history, I have made it more difficult to attain. In studying castle restorers and their motivations it is difficult to take a step back from the evidence and look entirely disinterestedly, as I am one of their number. When I raise tricky questions about social class aspirations, financial difficulties, risk-taking behaviour, the lure of romanticism, etc., I have to ask them not only of my subjects, but also of myself, and look hard at my own motivations. It is an uncomfortable kind of gazing. I find it hard, too, to be in a position where I judge fellow restorers, who have mostly been motivated by the very best of intentions (although some may not have acted in the best interests of their buildings). Many have been kind enough to invite me into their homes and have shared their stories most generously. I have tried to represent their positions honestly and convey a sense of the individual passion which drove them to rebuild their ruinous historical buildings, while taking a wider and more *dispassionate* view of the circumstances in which they operated. Absolute neutrality is not possible in this research; the title of this dissertation contains a clue, in its use of the loaded word 'rescued'. It seems to me that the restoration of over one hundred Scottish castles and towers is, on the whole, definitely a Good Thing, although I have some sympathy with the views of Morris and Ruskin. Despite acknowledging a personal interest, however, I have striven in this thesis to attain objectivity and balance throughout.



FIGURE 1 BARHOLM CASTLE

## ABSTRACT

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The second half of the twentieth century saw a 'Golden Age' of castle restoration in Scotland. During this time over one hundred ruined or derelict castles and towers were rebuilt and reoccupied, mostly by private owners who purchased the building with a view to restoring it. This was a far greater number of restorations than at any time in the past, yet the literature on castles has largely by-passed this modern 'renaissance' of Renaissance buildings. The majority of the restorers bought a ruinous or derelict building with which they had no family connection - mostly from 'old' owners whose family had owned the building for generations - and were often prepared to take substantial financial risks, undergo physical hardships and face considerable uncertainty over planning applications. Clans, charitable trusts and public bodies, such as local councils, also carried out restoration projects, as did a small number of 'old' owners. What caused such a proliferation? Two research questions are posed: why were so many Scottish castles restored between 1945 and 2010, and who were the restorers? The question of why so much activity took place in this period is analyzed in terms of the developing 'restoration climate', which was increasingly championed by the media, and the interrelationships between social, political and economic factors which allowed it to flourish. At the heart of these relationships are the owners, whose demographic characteristics are surveyed. Their personal qualities and motivations are also examined through an analysis of first person narratives and published interviews with the owners of many of the restored buildings, both in Scotland and beyond its borders, alongside surveys of the architectural features of the castles themselves. It was concluded that the restorations represent a positive benefit to Scotland, through the rescue of an irreplaceable and iconic section of the country's built heritage which would otherwise have been irretrievably lost.

## INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE

---

The story of castle and tower house restoration in Scotland is one of vision, optimism, determination, and fascination.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1945 and 2010, more than one hundred Scottish castles were restored for reoccupation from a ruinous or derelict state, and of these 76 had been sold to new individual owners for restoration. The rest were restored by 'old' owners, whose families had owned the castle for generations, or by local councils or building trusts. There was a wide scale renewal of Scottish castellated buildings in the second half of the twentieth century – a renaissance of Renaissance buildings, one might say. In addition to the full restorations of uninhabited buildings, a further 150 or so castles were saved from serious decay through extensive repairs, and at least sixteen new tower houses were built which mimic sixteenth century design. This occurred alongside many changes in ownership and a widening of public access, as castle owners turned increasingly to commercial activities. Although castle restoration is not a new phenomenon, and indeed has been an ongoing activity since at least the eighteenth century, the recent number of restorations has been much greater than in any preceding period and the reasons for undertaking them have changed. Between 1945 and 2010 there was an extraordinary level of castellated building conservation activity for such a small country in such a short space of time; the growing wave of numbers throughout this period calls for an explanation which is rooted in a complex series of interrelationships between social, economic, political, psychological, and architectural factors, which sometimes extend beyond Scotland's boundaries. This research addresses the question of *why* so much castle rebuilding, repair and restoration increasingly took place in this period, and attempts to find answers within the context of these factors and their interrelationships. It also looks specifically at the individual and corporate restoring owners, and makes both a qualitative and quantitative analysis of their individual circumstances and, where possible, their motivations, in order to answer a second question, *who* were the restorers? The buildings, too, are surveyed and analyzed, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in terms of their size, location, condition and end use, to examine the extent to which various architectural and geographical factors are significant.

## TERMINOLOGY

---

The first question to be addressed in this research is simply, *what is a castle?* Or rather, what do we understand a castle to be? The Shorter Oxford Dictionary definition is quite encompassing: 'A large building or set of buildings fortified for defence; a fortress. Retained as a name for large mansions which were formerly feudal castles.' One of the Internet online dictionaries<sup>2</sup> has added a couple of modifications to the 'fortified building' definition of a castle: **a.** A large fortified building or group of buildings with thick walls, usually dominating the surrounding country, **b.** A

---

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm Cooper in Richard Fawcett and Allan Rutherford **Renewed Life for Scottish Castles** (2011) Council for British Archaeology, York, preface

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Castle> accessed September 2010

fortified stronghold converted to residential use. **c.** A large ornate building *similar to or resembling a fortified stronghold*. (italics added) These last two online definitions (b and c), along with the more standard definition (a) seem to reflect the broad understanding, which most people have, of what castles *can* be, i.e. buildings which look defensive but are not necessarily fortified. Definitions, however carefully crafted, do not necessarily represent objects as we individually understand them. How do we assign meanings to words and how do we come to shared understandings? Do *I* really know that what *you* mean by a word – ‘love’, say, or ‘mother’, or ‘castle’ – is what *I* understand by it? What does the word ‘castle’ symbolize in general, and, more specifically, within a Scottish context? As will be shown, the use of ‘castle’ as a catch-all descriptor of all buildings which look fortified (even if the promise of defence is a blatant impossibility) is highly contentious. However, for the purpose of this research, in which representations are the most significant focus, the widest definition is taken, to include all buildings which are called ‘castle’ and/or look like a castle, from small sixteenth century towers to large Victorian castellated mansions. This extends the dictionary definitions, which include large size as a feature of castles; in Scotland, many small towers are named ‘castle’ and popularly perceived to be such, although the ‘castle’ appellation is usually not original, but a later addition:

At some time in the eighteenth century, countless Scottish mansions were given the title ‘castle’ as a consequence of changing social aspiration and of the misreading of a European building form in Scotland within an English context. After the Romantic Movement, others adopted a title ‘tower’ as being redolent of mediaeval romance.<sup>3</sup>

‘Restoration’ is also a tricky term. It is a word bandied about imprecisely when applied to buildings, covering activity across the spectrum from interior redecoration to complete rebuilding; it is also a word, like its close associate, ‘heritage’, heavy with significance – both positive and negative – for those with strong views on architecture. In this research, ‘restoration’ only applies to the rebuilding and reoccupation of properties which were uninhabited and uninhabitable, ranging from roofless ruins to recently derelict buildings.

## THE METHODOLOGY

---

Two research methodologies have been employed in this thesis: survey and narrative analysis. The first person narratives of fifteen restorers of Scottish castles, newspaper interviews with many others and narratives about several restoration projects outside Scotland have been used as primary sources and analysed. Nine degrees of intervention which the historian can employ in interpreting texts about the past are proposed by Robert F. Berkhofer Jr, in *Beyond the Great Story. History as Text and Discourse*. These range from reproduction of entire documents without mediation (the first – and ‘purest’ – degree), through selected quotations, descriptions,

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<sup>3</sup> Charles McKean, ‘Castles, Palaces and Fortified Houses’ in Geoffrey Stell, John Shaw and Susan Storrier (eds) **Scottish Life and Society Vol.3 Scotland’s Buildings** (2003) Tuckwell Press, East Linton, 27

paraphrasing, extrapolations, representations and interpretations.<sup>4</sup> As much as possible, this research has been aimed at level two, using selected quotations extensively to allow the castle restorers to speak for themselves, particularly in chapters four and five, in which are presented the restoration narratives. Inevitably, though, it has been necessary also to describe, paraphrase, extrapolate, represent and interpret meanings. The context of both the constructed history and the historian need to be made explicit in the postmodernist world, and the preamble has been an attempt to do so, but to follow the postmodernist rejection of a positivistic approach would make it impossible to give a satisfactory account of the context. Tadhg O’Keeffe warned, in the context of Irish castle studies, of the potential superficiality of empiricism and essentialism:

(We) should not restrict our enquiries to the traditional questions: how old? who was the builder? what are the formal comparanda? Those questions reflect the traditional empiricism and essentialism in castle-studies: they reflect, in other words, the consensus not only about the need for the collection and processing of empirical data but also about which empirical data bring us closest to understanding the essences of the buildings. But deeper levels of inquiry are possible. These require us to recognise that we, as modern commentators concerned with understanding, are a part of the castles’ stories. We should not think of ourselves as scientists who collect data which lead to irrefutable proof or disproof of certain propositions about castles, but recognize instead that our world-views inform our collection and presentation of the data, our interpretations of the functions of the buildings (the military versus domestic debate, for example), and our judgements of the social and symbolic meanings of certain features.<sup>5</sup>

The dangers of positivism highlighted by O’Keeffe are acknowledged. However, this thesis takes an empirical approach by presenting, as part of the response to the research questions, statistical surveys of a number of changes which took place in Scottish castles between 1945 and 2010. It is argued that without reasonably precise knowledge of how many and when, there can be no understanding of *why*. Nevertheless it is also acknowledged that the choice of data collected and presented represents one aspect of the picture, coloured by a particular world view, and also by the availability of sources, and not an absolute view of truth itself. Additionally, the contemporary stories of those involved with castles feature prominently in this research as a counterbalance and essential supplement to the empirical data.

### **The Surveys – addressing the question of why**

....the greatest demand is for smaller castles and tower houses which have a cachet that no other building type can match. Since the war it is estimated that some 200 have been rescued, often from long abandonment and restored as private houses.<sup>6</sup>

One reason for taking an empiricist approach in this research is simply to be sure that what is claimed is as accurate as possible and that large (and small) numbers are not quoted without

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<sup>4</sup> Robert J. Berkhofer, Jr., **Beyond the Great Story. History as Text and Discourse** (1997) Harvard University Press, Harvard, 150

<sup>5</sup> Tadhg O’Keeffe, ‘Concepts of ‘castle’ **Irish Geography**, Volume 34(1) (2001), 69-88

<sup>6</sup> Marcus Dean and Mary Miers **Scotland’s Endangered Houses** (1990) SAVE Britain’s Heritage, London, 8



evidence. The estimate by Dean and Miers, quoted above, that ‘some 200’ small castles and tower houses have been rescued since the war is wrong. The true number is around half of that, depending on definitions of castles and ‘rescue’ (see appendix 1 for the list). Ian Gow was also wrong when he claimed that, “Although some tower houses have been lost.....for the most part they have been the subject of a truly remarkable restoration programme, to an extent that there is hardly a single ruined tower house left in the Scottish landscape other than the carefully managed ancient monuments maintained in a splendid ruination by Historic Scotland.”<sup>7</sup> There are an estimated sixty or so ruined towers and castles still in private hands, some of which are at serious risk of further decay. The HS website Castle Conservation Register “identifies ruined castles and tower houses that we believe could be successfully restored and reused.”<sup>8</sup> However, it is not possible to find out, from the search facility, how many there are and what buildings have been identified.

The synthesizing of a very large body of information from disparate sources in order to identify and analyze a major but hitherto unreported phenomenon is one *raison d’être* of this research. In order to address the question of why so many castles were rebuilt between 1945 and 2010, seven surveys have been conducted and their results analysed:

- The castle buildings which were changed, or rescued, through rebuilding, repair and restoration *before* 1945
- The castle buildings which have been changed, or rescued, through rebuilding and restoration *after* 1945
- The owners who engaged in these activities
- Other UK castles which have been restored, plus some European examples
- Scottish castles demolished after 1945;
- Castles which have started the process of restoration but have never finished
- New Scottish castles, built after 1945.

The evidence for the surveys lies both in primary sources – the buildings themselves and first hand narratives by owners and architects – and secondary sources contained in the media of newspaper reports, magazines, journals, books, both scholarly and popular, and the Internet. The second and third surveys (of castles and owners since 1945) were carried out in direct response to the two research questions; the other five in order to provide context, contrast and supplementary evidence. The categorizing, ordering and analyzing of large data sets guards against the seeing of patterns where none exist – for example, so powerful is Gerald Laing’s

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<sup>7</sup> Ian Gow, **Scotland’s Lost Houses** (2006) Arum Press, London, 7

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/scottishcastleinitiative/castleconservationregister.htm>

Kinkell story in the castle restoring literature and among the ‘fraternity’ of restorers that it is easy to fall into the trap of looking for and finding heroic DIY owners everywhere and believing that they represent the majority. But, although around 60 castles were restored by hands-on owners who personally directed and to some extent participated in a successful re-building, the majority were not nearly as physically involved as Laing. Another example is the restored castles which offer accommodation or wedding venues, which are very publicly evident and might seem to be in the majority. Yet they number only 21 – although the total number of Scottish castles in this category is at least 180.

The survey of the castellated buildings of Scotland which have been restored since 1945 is intended to be exhaustive in its general scope. Quantitative analyses have been carried out on factors such as the size, location and condition of the buildings and the dates when work was started and completed, and these data linked to the results of the survey of owners. Dates of completion are particularly difficult to quantify, since many owners claim that their restorations are continually ongoing projects and thus never finished. It is relatively straightforward to decide when work started – although ‘false starts’ are quite common and can muddy the waters, such as Duntarvie Castle in West Lothian, which was bought by a restorer in 1993, eventually scaffolded, and then put back on the market in 2008 – but deciding at what point a building is ‘finished’ is much more difficult. Owners often move in to a building which is still derelict, sometimes living in conditions which might be classified by social workers in different circumstances as squalid and unsafe, and carry out do-it-yourself repairs over a lengthy period of years with an indeterminate endpoint (for example Ravenstone Castle in Wigtownshire and Torwood in Stirlingshire; neither was finished in 2010, although the former was started in the 1970s and the latter in the 1950s). Deciding on the age of a building is often even more difficult, given that many Scottish castles have undergone multiple changes and additions over centuries.



FIGURE 2 RAVENSTONE CASTLE, BUILT IN MANY STAGES<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Author

The survey of restoring owners is not fully exhaustive. Some owners have died since their restoration, some have sold up or are no longer traceable and have left no written record, and some do not wish to discuss their work with journalists or researchers. Despite this, basic details of individual circumstances (e.g. name, nationality, profession, gender, approximate age, marital status) are available for the majority of the restorers and more or less detailed information has been obtained for a smaller majority, so that quantitative analyses can claim to be based on comprehensive data. The other five surveys provide context, both historical and geographic. Details of restorations carried out before 1945 show that the majority of building projects were carried out by 'old' owners, who were either extending a family home, or repairing a shooting or hunting lodge on the family estate. These are described in Chapter one. Only a handful of castles were purchased as derelict buildings to be rebuilt for a family home between 1800 and 1945, compared with 58 between 1945 and 2010. Numbers of demolitions declined sharply after the 1970s, although during the postwar period, and particularly the 1960s, demolition was common. The survey of newbuild castles is brief and possibly not exhaustive, as data for these is hard to come by in the public domain.

### **The primary source narratives – addressing the question, who were the restorers?**

Narrative has become a handy portmanteau term for a broad area of social science research which attempts to analyze events, and sometimes identities, through the medium of personal stories. In this research, fifteen first person narratives by castle restorers are examined in chapter five, representing, as far as is known, **all** of the available printed sources for Scottish castles between 1945 and 2010 in the autobiographical genre. Extracts from further restoration narratives, comprising media articles about castle restorations and, specifically, interviews by journalists which include direct quotes from the restorers are included throughout chapters four and five. These represent the two distinct types of narrative presented in this research. In addition extracts from eight narratives, some first person, some reported interviews, of castle restorations that took place in other countries (England, Wales, Ireland, Spain, Italy, France and Romania), are given, in order to provide a cross-cultural context and comparison with the situations and the perceptions of the non-Scottish restorers. In the fifteen autobiographical written accounts, the narrators tell the story of a significant series of events which affected them personally and/or in which they acted as protagonist – e.g. Gerald Laing's book *Kinkell. The Reconstruction of a Scottish Castle* – and reflect, with varying degrees of introspection, upon their experiences. The third person case studies comprise written accounts of interviews conducted by journalists, in newspapers, magazines or on the Internet. These usually have informational, scene-setting or judgmental statements interspersed with direct quotes from the respondents (e.g. 'We are sitting on leather chairs in the homely surroundings of the vaulted kitchen with a black cat purring on the antique farmhouse table; Baron Steel of Aikwood, former leader of the Liberal Party, and, in 1999, Presiding Officer of the first Scottish Parliament before his recent retirement, describes how he and Lady Steel took on the challenging restoration of Aikwood Tower near Selkirk. "We lived two miles up the road and visited the Tower on a regular basis. It was full of

pigeons and rats but had caught our imagination.<sup>10</sup>), so that there is an uneven co-construction of the narrative, with control of the finished account lying with the journalist or editor. In newspapers and magazines, stories of castle restoration tend to be situated on the boundary between ordinary and extraordinary, often juxtaposing the two – for example, a man from a very humble background becomes ‘laird of the castle’ by dint of phenomenally hard work and a bit of luck.

Narratives are used in this dissertation not only as part of the primary sources of the research methodology; a number of different narratives are also mentioned in chapters one and two, on context. The diaries of Roy Strong, James Lees-Milne and John Harris describe the heritage debates of the 1960s and 70s from the personal perspectives of key players; although all are English, based in England and rarely even mention Scotland, their insights into the larger issues of building conservation in the UK during a period of national and international changes in attitudes are important in illuminating the context of the external influences on Scotland. Narratives by and about the aristocratic owners of stately homes which were opened to the public in the 1950s and 60s (Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, Henry Frederick Thynne, 6th Marquess of Bath, and the Duke of Bedford) also contribute to the picture of a period of rapid change for historic buildings.

### **Secondary sources - the literature, background and context**

The main theme of the review of castle-related literature is that of representation. The question of what meanings castles represent, to whom, and how they are represented is central to the research question of why so many castles were restored. The literature and secondary sources reviewed for this research span a range of disciplines beyond history, including sociology, cultural studies, semiotics, literature, politics, economics, media studies, biography, psychology, geography, and architecture. These may be grouped as four interrelated themes: society and culture, media and politics, individuals, and architecture, which run in an interdisciplinary network throughout the research. From one vantage point, this is a sociological study of the unusual behavior of a group of people – castle restorers – and the factors within society which set the scene for that behaviour to occur. Sociological literature, particularly that by David McCrone, who has written widely on the sociology of Scotland, is adduced to provide a picture of Scottish society in the second half of the twentieth century which is backed up by social science research and theory. Within the picture is that most sociological of concepts, class - always a challenging subject to tackle. R.H.Tawney noted that the word ‘class’ “is fraught with unpleasing associations, so that to linger upon it is apt to be interpreted as the symptom of a perverted mind and a jaundiced spirit”.<sup>11</sup> However, it is an important area to address, in that the ‘new’ owners of Scottish castles were often from a very different social class background to the ‘old’ owners from whom they purchased the properties. Culturally, the restoration projects examined in this research are very much embedded within a Scottish context; questions about ‘national identity’

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<sup>10</sup>Interview with Lord David Steel in **Broughtons Magazine Online** Issue 3, undated (but probably written before 2004) <http://www.broughtonsmagazine.co.uk/issue3/content/aikwood.html> accessed March 2010

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in David Cannadine, **Class in Britain** (1998) Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, xiii

and 'heritage' are raised in chapter two and compared with the situation in other European countries.

The media have had a significant role to play in both reflecting and determining the meanings of 'castle' and 'restoration'. The language of newspaper reports is quoted and analysed in chapters four and five. Other media, including film and fictional literature, are examined in chapter one. Politically, changes in conservation legislation drove forward change and protected buildings at risk. These legislative changes were the result of strenuous campaigns by conservation bodies and individuals. From a psychological viewpoint, the individual restorers and campaigners move to centre stage, their motivations strengthened by the interaction of social and personal circumstances and temperament. Individual narratives are addressed in chapter four. Classic psychoanalytic theory would assess and explain the behaviour in terms of the instinctual drives which arose from childhood. Carl Jung, one of the earliest and most influential psychoanalysts, built his own tower at Bollingen in Switzerland, firstly from 1923 – 24; he then expanded the building by adding more towers over a period of thirty years. He learned stonemasonry and built the towers with his own hands to use as a solitary retreat. "Jung was aware of the ancient symbolism of the tower as a place of religious experience, of introspection, of astrological investigation, of refuge – and he explored all these aspects fully in the various emblems with which .....he decorated the tower and its precincts."<sup>12</sup> The significance of the tower as a symbol and also as an architectural form which is especially prevalent in Scotland is addressed in chapter one. In terms of architectural history, the buildings played a central role; their size, age, location, function and condition were all significant factors in the process of rebuilding. But transcending these is the universally romantic appeal of a castle. With such a range of disciplinary approaches, the methodology and analysis must be eclectic, borrowing from the relevant strengths of each when appropriate.

There is a large body of historical literature on Scottish castles, both popular and academic, which thoroughly investigates many aspects of these buildings, in terms of their architecture and function, but mainly from an archaeological and/or military viewpoint. The Pevsner *Buildings of Scotland* series (as yet incomplete) contains useful information on architectural details, including the names of restoring architects and dates of rebuilding work. Little has been written about castles in a contemporary and/or social context – i.e. focusing on the occupants – apart from a few coffee table books which concentrate on the owners' skills at interior decoration, or their clan connections. In terms of restorations, the fifteen first person narratives and the many newspaper and magazine articles written by opportunistic journalists detail the rebuilding of individual Scottish castles. A number of the restorations have been private and largely unreported, however. Other sources include the 'grey literature' of the Internet, which contains a huge amount of information about Scottish castles. A search for any castle will yield tens of thousands of links to website pages which have been uploaded by castle owners, clan societies, historians,

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<sup>12</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski **The View from the Tower. Origins of an Antimodernist Image** (1998) Princeton University Press, Princeton, 142

local interest groups, castle websites, families, Wikipedia<sup>13</sup> and linked sites, newspapers and magazines. Increasingly, even full text books with the castle's name highlighted on the relevant pages can be found. Critics complain that unverified information is repeated from website to website without any critical input, but this is no different from printed material, where book after book often repeats the same mistaken 'fact'. For example, most 'castles of Scotland' books with an entry for Barholm Castle state that John Knox sheltered there, without citing any evidence; the evidence that does exist is extremely tenuous at best. One simply must read critically. Even Wikipedia, which was initially scorned by teachers and scholars, now provides the majority of its articles with appropriate references, many of them hyperlinked to the full text of academic articles on the Internet so that they are open to critical analysis. Information about sales and ownership and commercial activities has mainly come from the Internet, from estate agents' and newspapers' websites. Newspaper articles have mostly been sourced through Nexis, a full text searchable World Wide Web database of hundreds of English language media publications. Every restored castle in Scotland has been checked on this database and also on the wider Internet to source newspaper and magazine articles about the building and its owners. The majority of searches have yielded several articles. When the information in them has contained contradictions, or has seemed unreliable, further checks have been made in printed sources. One specific problem with searching the Internet for information on castles has been the 'noise' from dances (e.g. Kinfauns Castle Reel), dogs (e.g. Gordon Castle setter) and ships named Castle X. Additionally, thirteen castles have 'doubles', i.e. more than one castle shares a name. There are five Newark Castles and three Blair Castles, for example. A few castles have more than one name, or have changed names, such as Borroigill Castle, renamed the Castle of Mey by the Queen Mother when she bought it in 1952. A number of castles have several different spellings; Fawside (Fa'side) Castle is said by its owners to have eleven<sup>14</sup>. All of these minor difficulties have made meticulous searching strategies and much double-checking necessary.

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## THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

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This research addresses two questions: why were so many Scottish castles restored in the period after 1945, and who were the restorers? There is no single literature review chapter; the literature spans a number of disciplines and areas of interest, and each is dealt with chapter by chapter according to the theme and/or subject matter, although the majority of background literature is dealt with in the first two chapters. The chapters have been organized so that numbers one and two present context and three, four and five the results of the research, followed by a concluding chapter. A 'road map' to the thesis follows, with a short synopsis of each chapter.

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<sup>13</sup> The online encyclopedia at <http://www.wikipedia.org/>

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication from Sue Brash, owner

## Chapter one

Chapter one contains a review of the historiography and representation of the castle from the eighteenth century to the present day. The romantic appeal of castellated architecture, particularly in ruinous form, is long-standing and can be traced in popular literature for centuries up to the present day. Representations of the castle in newspapers, novels, glossy periodicals, television programmes, the Internet and cinema films provide a window into popular culture and a reflection of the interest which the buildings generate, and these are analysed with particular emphasis on the symbolism which helped to make castle restoration an increasingly acceptable and even laudable activity. The language of castles and castellology in the academic literature is also examined and debates over terminology analysed. A historiographical overview traces scholarly debates – sometimes acrimonious – about the role of castles in society and the significance of architectural features.

Chapter one also provides a contextual historical overview of the rebuilding and remodeling of Scottish castles, from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, with particular emphasis on the previous one hundred years, 1845 - 1945. This was a busy period with a great deal of building activity, especially at the end of the nineteenth century, although not nearly as much as after 1945. The survey may not be exhaustive, as it is difficult to be sure of the complete building history of every castle in Scotland; it may assumed to be fairly thorough, however, as all castles have been investigated, through books which carry accounts of castle histories and through Internet searches of castles, and also the records contained in the Dictionary of Scottish Architects online database<sup>15</sup>. The reasons for rebuilding and the types of owners were different, on the whole, from those in more recent times, but they provide the historical context for those who came later. Changes in attitudes to historic buildings and in conservation practice are traced and examined in chapter two.

## Chapter two

In chapter two the political and social context of the period from 1945 – 2010 is examined, particularly in the context of the growth of the ‘heritage industry’, the role of the media and campaigning individuals and organizations, and the chronology of conservation legislation and its impact on practice. Charitable conservation bodies played a role in changing public attitudes and conservation practice. The role of legislation - usually brought about by the strenuous political campaigning of a few key figures – was critical in gradually increasing the protection of buildings at risk from dereliction and destruction, and also in encouraging (sometimes, paradoxically, discouraging) owners considering restoration. Hand in hand with increased statutory protection came an increase in the social value placed on historic buildings, as the ‘heritage industry’ became established during the 1970s and 1980s. These changes in attitudes and statutory powers were not confined to the United Kingdom, but were part of a framework of protection which stretched Europe-wide, from the 1966 Venice Charter, which set out many of the fundamental principles which are applicable to the conservation of the built heritage, to the 2001 Valetta Convention

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/> accessed March 2010

(The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage) which was signed by the UK Government in 2000 and came into effect in the UK in March 2001.

Chapter two also places Scotland in the wider context of the United Kingdom, Europe and the rest of the world. Castles have an iconic appeal in Scotland, just as in the 'castle rich' countries of France, Germany, Spain and Central Europe (and to some extent in Wales and Ireland), but their salience for local cultural mores, social structures and historical events differs. During the Second World War, historic buildings across much of Europe had sustained serious losses. In some areas of continental Europe, war damage led to a great amount of rebuilding activity in the 1950s, when many buildings had to be extensively repaired. Others were either demolished or were left as ruins. The numbers of Western European castle restorations increased steadily during the period, as in Scotland, although Scotland differs from other European countries, apart from Ireland, in the small domestic scale of most of its restored castellated buildings, which makes them accessible to individuals. The history of European and worldwide conservation measures is briefly traced.

### **Chapter three**

In chapter three, surveys of the one hundred and two castle buildings which were reoccupied from a ruinous or derelict state, and also their restoring owners, are presented and analysed. 'Reoccupied' means that the buildings were made habitable – i.e. furnished and with all basic essential services for modern living, including bathrooms, a kitchen and some kind of heating system. Not all were inhabited full time; some were let out intermittently to holidaymakers and some became meeting places for clan societies, etc., or opened to the public as museums. But the majority of those purchased by individuals were rebuilt for the restoring family to live in. Questions of the importance of size, location, condition, age, ownership and end use are addressed.

The majority of castles which were restored and reoccupied in the period 1945 – 2010 are small sixteenth century towers, rather than Victorian Baronial mansions; this is almost certainly more to do with availability, costs and practicalities rather than aesthetic choice. The rebuilding of the majority of castles involved the purchase of a ruinous or derelict building by new owners without any previous connection to it or the land surrounding it - mostly from 'old' owners whose family had owned the building and surrounding land for generations. The idiosyncratic nature of both owners and castles means that generalizations are difficult, but it is nevertheless possible to make a number of clear statements about the general types of owners who have restored buildings at certain times. For example, early in the period, in the 1950s, the individual restoring owners were already wealthy landowners, such as Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, but by the 1990s the majority of restorers had no previous landowning connections and many were not financially well-off; also, unsurprisingly, the larger buildings are more often restored by institutions than individuals. However, the majority of castle restorations were undertaken by individuals, whose personality, gender, age, social class, occupation, *weltanschauung*, family circumstances and financial security all influenced and mediated their actions.



## Chapter four

This chapter examines the processes and outcomes of restoration, including the projects that failed and the ones newly built to mimic 16<sup>th</sup> century towers. The process of rebuilding was, in some cases, supported financially by Historic Scotland, but despite the financial commitment, HS was often perceived to be interfering at best and a barrier to progress at worst. The *outcomes* of the restorations are considered in terms of changes in the way that castles are used, accessed and perceived within local and national contexts, and also changes in the surrounding landscape resulting from the restorations. The reasons for these changes are also examined. One major change that has taken place since 1945 is the increase in access to castles for the paying public, either as customers in overnight accommodation, wedding guests or day tripping tourists paying an entry fee to tour the interior, leading to a kind of democratization of the Scottish castle. Reasons for this commercialization, including the Internet as a significant tool in encouraging access, are examined. About a dozen larger buildings, including Menstrie, have been divided into apartments and now are in multiple ownership. In some cases, this restructuring has been done sensitively – for example, Cullen House in Banff, restructured by Kit Martin – and has allowed an endangered building to survive; other large buildings have been hacked about to enable institutional use (e.g. Duncraig) and were seriously compromised architecturally as a result. In addition to the successful restorations, several would-be restoring owners failed, for a variety of reasons, to bring their plans to a successful conclusion, and these are described and analysed.

Another outcome of many of the restorations has been changes in the landscape surrounding the castles. Estates were often carved up when castles were sold to give the new owner only a small amount of land surrounding the building within the farmland or countryside where it stood. Ruined castles, which had stood starkly in the middle of fields for centuries, usually bereft of their walls of enclosure and outbuildings, became houses with pretty domestic gardens.



FIGURE 3 TOWIE BARCLAY GARDENS<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Author



FIGURE 4 COMLONGON CASTLE WEDDING<sup>17</sup>

## Chapter five

Individual case studies of restoring owners are presented in this chapter, fifteen of which are first person accounts. These narratives represent the primary sources of this research; they flesh out the statistics with the human side of the restoration stories, illustrating the difficulties, frustrations, challenges and triumphs which owners faced in their restoration projects. Themes of challenge, anti-modernism, adventure, risk, hard work, heritage, romance, dream fulfillment, sacrifice, national identity, altruism and continuity are identified in the restoration narratives. Fifteen is a large number and consequently the richness of detail that normally accompanies a case study is not possible for each one. However, as the basis for the qualitative analysis, the numbers of narratives – at about fifty per cent of individual owners, if journalists' reports are included – is large enough to be representative of the population as a whole. The richness of detail varies widely from case to case; some owners have reflected deeply on their motivations and are articulate in their descriptions of the process of purchase and rebuilding, while others deal much more briefly and prosaically with events and their reasons. Nevertheless, even the most superficial of narratives extends the scope of the statistics and illuminates the very personal, individual and idiosyncratic nature of any restoration project. Differences between projects lie in the personal circumstances (particularly wealth, or lack of it), and knowledge and understanding of the building. One owner's romantic enthusiasm may lead to a scrupulously faithful reinstatement of original features; another's may send the imagination spinning towards Disney turrets, crenellations and gunloops that never were.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.celticcastles.com/castles/comlongon/> accessed March 2011



FIGURE 5 THE 'GATEHOUSE' AT RAVENSTONE CASTLE<sup>18</sup>

Narratives are analyzed in this thesis from a social constructionist point of view, i.e. they are not seen as reflections of 'fact' or absolute reality, but are viewed as personal interpretations through which people represent themselves and their worlds in the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations. The social world itself is assumed to be replete with narratives, represented by the media, through which people build up a sense of identity, both at a personal and cultural level. The narratives which are the result of media interviews (as opposed to first person narratives) are co-constructed by the restorer and a journalist, with power of editorial decision-making resting with the media. Media representations of castles are addressed to some extent in chapter one, as is the issue of national identity. This chapter looks at newspaper and magazine representations of restorations in particular. It also gives details of eight further first person narrative case studies of restorations, which were carried out in England, Wales and Ireland, Spain, France and Italy. While these could be viewed as contextual and might thus have been placed in chapter two, it seems more relevant to position them as a kind of interesting 'postscript' to the Scottish projects, since there is no suggestion that any of them influenced what went on in Scotland; indeed, the influence may have been in the other direction. Whatever the case, the comparisons are interesting and serve to highlight and emphasise universalities in the themes which have exercised castle restorers in Scotland.

## Chapter six

Finally, chapter six addresses the conclusions of the analyses and evaluates the methodology and the general significance of the surveys. The close proximity of the events described incurs a danger of a lack of perspective and detachment; however, 'present-mindedness' is not a problem and the likelihood of anachronism is slight. History stereotypically deals with events long past, yet in this research the characters involved are mostly still alive and the 'golden age' of Scottish castle restoration has (probably) not yet ended - although activity has slowed considerably, probably largely to due to lack of supply. Inevitably, the qualitative nature of the narratives, my personal

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<sup>18</sup> Author

acquaintance with several of the protagonists and my close involvement with the subject, mean that personal judgments have been made about how best to interpret the evidence supplied. "The traditional professional ideal is objectivity and balance and, for some historians, neutrality and detachment also."<sup>19</sup> This thesis has aimed for objectivity, balance and detachment. Complete neutrality is probably a step too far.

A considered answer to the question of why so many castles were restored at this time fills the pages of this research thesis. Who these people were, is also complex; on the one hand, they were a disparate group of individuals with interesting personal stories. These are explored in depth in this research, and commonalities and differences between them are highlighted. Although the specific questions of *who* and *why* are the focus of the thesis, this research is also, by default, about the larger theme of processes of change in Scottish castles. There is much still to be researched and written about this. Finally, speculations are offered as to the future for Scotland's castles.

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<sup>19</sup> Berkhofer **Beyond the Great Story**, 139

## CHAPTER ONE: LANGUAGE & HISTORIOGRAPHY

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The castle has always been a formidable image, a powerful intimidating fantasy of the human imagination. The fortress, the citadel, the craggy tower dominating the landscape: it is older than history, as natural to man as the eagle to the eyrie.<sup>20</sup>

It is difficult to think of any other building type – if one includes all manifestations of the word, from fortress to chateau – that has the same power to attract fascinated interest and even devotion in people of all ages, cultures and classes, and the same symbolic representation of power itself. The romantic appeal of castellated architecture can be traced in art and literature for centuries up to the present day. Representations of the castle in novels, glossy periodicals, television programmes, the Internet and films provide a window into popular culture and a reflection of the excitement which the buildings inspire. Scholars, too, find castles seductively attractive, and have even appropriated a new term to cover their field of study: castellology<sup>21</sup>. Of all architectural forms in Scotland, the castle is surely the most written about. Ruined castles, in particular, elicit awe and admiration and have been the subjects of art, poetry and romantic prose since at least the seventeenth century.

Numerous popular and academic books and articles have described and analysed in detail nearly all of the 1000 or so extant buildings in Scotland, both in terms of their architectural history and the history of their ownership and occupation. Tadhg O’Keeffe raised the question of how well we can really know a historical building, however: “There is always a limit to how intimately a castle can be known without being able to step back into the middle ages, see the medieval world through contemporary eyes, view a building as it was then, and talk to and listen to the observations of others also viewing it.”<sup>22</sup> Bridging the gap between the concrete world of ancient buildings, and the intangible meanings of the word ‘castle’ associated with them, involves a series of questions about culture and identity in ancient and contemporary society and the role of both scholars and the media in representing those meanings and their significance.

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### THE LANGUAGE OF CASTLES: WHAT *IS* A CASTLE?

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.. [S]cepticism about the potential to achieve a ‘correct’ definition of ‘castle’ certainly does not mean that it is futile to search for meaning in the concept of ‘castle’, or in the actual buildings themselves. On the contrary, all that is required for a castle to possess meaning is for there to be a spectator to bring meaning to it.<sup>23</sup>

In this sense, we all bring our individual meanings to the term ‘castle’, as spectators, and I will argue that multiple meanings are legitimate, if not all equally so. The definition of castle adopted

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<sup>20</sup> Rose Macaulay **Pleasure of Ruins**, (1953) Walker & Co., New York, 441

<sup>21</sup> Castellology does not (yet) appear in the Oxford English Dictionary

<sup>22</sup> Tadhg O’Keeffe ‘Concepts of ‘castle’” **Irish Geography**, Volume 34(1), 2001, 70

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 71

for this study<sup>24</sup> may seem innocuous, but it is nonetheless contentious. The peculiarly Scottish identity of the buildings which are the focus of this research must be held in mind; these are not just *any* castles, but the castles of Scotland, and their terminology is particularly significant, as will be discussed later. The field of cognitive psychology, which includes the study of language, looks at words in terms of concepts and categories:

The fundamental unit of symbolic knowledge is the **concept** – an idea about something that provides a means of understanding about the world..... One way to organize concepts can be captured by the notion of a **category** – a concept itself, which functions to organize or point out aspects of equivalence among other concepts based on common features or similarity to a prototype. For example the word *apple* can act both as a category, as in a collection of different kinds of apples, and as a concept within the category *fruit*.<sup>25</sup>

The substitution of the word *castle* for ‘apple’ and *buildings* for ‘fruit’ makes sense. A castle is certainly a category; an individual castle can be seen as representing one of many different categories of castle – e.g. Norman, motte and bailey, fairytale, tower – and also as a category of the larger concept of buildings. The problem with this essentialist view arises when we try to define the word ‘castle’ as a categorical concept in its own right; categories have characteristic defining features and in order to stand alone they should have jointly sufficient features, e.g. bachelor (male, unmarried, adult). As Wittgenstein famously pointed out, this feature-based analysis does not work for the concept ‘game’, as it is impossible to find a common feature of all games:

Consider for example the proceedings that we call ‘games’. I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? – Don’t say: “There *must* be something in common, or they would not be called ‘games’” – but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all. – For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that.....And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.<sup>26</sup>

If one looks at some of the typical features of the category ‘castle’ - old, made of stone, having defensive features, tall, large, turrets, crenellations, ruinous, moat, drawbridge - the only common feature seems to be ‘made of stone’, which is hardly sufficient to hold the category together, since cottages and windmills and apartment blocks can also be made of stone, and castles are not even necessarily so – some are made of wood. ‘Castles’ are almost as difficult as ‘games’ to categorize using feature analysis. However, an examination of various buildings, such as Neuschwanstein in Germany, upon which the symbolic Disney castle was reputedly modeled, grand country mansions and palaces such as Culzean Castle in Ayrshire, and small ruined towers throughout Scotland, suggests that there are, indeed, similarities and relationships. It is proposed

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<sup>24</sup> A (large) fortified building or group of buildings with thick walls, or a fortified stronghold converted to residential use, or a (large) ornate building similar to or resembling a fortified stronghold

<sup>25</sup> Robert Sternberg **Cognitive Psychology** (2009) Wadsworth, Belmont CA, 254

<sup>26</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein **Philosophical Investigations: The German text, with a Revised English Translation** (2001, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition) Blackwell, Oxford, 27

that the main feature which links castles of all types is a seductive historical romanticism. Fantasies are generated when people visit castles and played out when they buy them.

An alternative way to conceptualize 'castle' would be by the use of prototype theory, which is based on features which describe the *typical* model of the category. These may be present in exemplars, but not all are necessary in every one. This is still not satisfying in its explanatory power, however, as it leaves us with the problem of incorporating the wide range of types of castles already mentioned. A constructivist view of meaning takes the view that we each hold a series of implicit theories based on complex mental representations, or schemas, which we construct on the basis of experience, incorporating characteristic features and exemplars of concepts. Schemas are mental frameworks for representing knowledge that encompass an array of interrelated concepts in a meaningful organization – so, for example, we would each have a number of schemas for castle, depending on how salient the concept is for us and how wide our experience of castles is. Based on this, our notions of castle would be individualistic, but able to encompass both Disneyesque, romantic chateaux and ancient fortresses under the same concept, much in the same way that we can understand that both penguins and robins are examples of birds, despite their manifest differences, and the distance of penguins from the prototype (i.e. small, flies around, sings songs, builds nests in trees).

But linguistic analysis at the individual level, however interesting, leaves out the salience of the representation of castle in the wider social and political context. The study of language as a system of signs can be a useful tool in deconstructing the use of castle-related terminology. By examining words such as *castle* as having meanings which are both denotative and connotative and which are constructed by a series of implicit codes serving ideological functions in society, it is possible to lay bare the complex layers of 'reality' contained in the terms and analyze whose interests they serve. A semiotic approach to the meaning of castle would conceptualize the castle as a *sign* and look not only at its denotative meanings, but also its connotative meanings. The fairytale multi-turreted castle has different connotations for the artist, who may be interested solely in aesthetics, than for business conglomerates such as the Disney Corporation, with financial interests in its representation, than for the historian who is studying seventeenth century architectural styles and wishes to publish in academic journals. Perhaps a more pertinent question would be, in whose interests are various representations? Whose reality is privileged? When Geoffrey Stell described Castle Tioram as 'very much a castellologist's castle'<sup>27</sup> he was signaling, in the context of a highly politicized debate about the future of the castle, Historic Scotland's claim, as the expert, to 'ownership' of its future. Language is a powerful means of staking territory and claiming privilege.

Nicholas Fairbairn, the Scottish advocate and politician who bought and restored Fordell Castle, complained that the word 'castle' had been used to smear him politically and that he did not win

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<sup>27</sup> Geoffrey Stell, **Castle Tioram: A Statement of Cultural Significance** (2006) Historic Scotland, Edinburgh, 6

the Central Edinburgh parliamentary seat in the 1964 General Election because of its misuse in the 'politics of envy':

"With Socialist envy, the Labour campaign in Central Edinburgh was personal. They used the word 'castle', which means a fortified residence, to impute to me grandeur, riches, exclusion, and all the legendary wickedness of the baron towards his vassals. I lived in luxury they alleged; the voters all lived in slums. I was a wicked, privileged oppressor .....Little did they know the slum which I had bought and taken over.<sup>28</sup>

Fairbairn's use of the word 'slum' is equally politically charged. Many Edinburgh voters did indeed live in slums – substandard, overcrowded housing with no inside toilets or even running water. Fordell Castle was partially derelict, but inhabited when he bought it in 1961, and for all its dereliction Fairbairn described it as 'an impressive fortress' when he first saw it. He was, moreover, independently wealthy, unlike the majority of the voters. Fordell Castle's value was highlighted in 2007 when it was put up for sale at the astonishing price of three and a half million pounds, at a time when very few Scottish properties fetched over one million pounds.

Charles McKean's book, *The Scottish Chateau*<sup>29</sup>, was named to direct attention away from the 'fortress' view of Scotland's castles. The design of the Renaissance country house and/or castle was reappraised with the argument that Scottish patrons and builders in this period deliberately employed the trappings of fortification as a symbol of courtly power and romanticism rather than as a response to any military threat. McKean argued that Scotland was a highly civilized society, whose contribution of fine country houses to European Renaissance architecture has gone unrecognized.

The ubiquitous 'heritage' presentation of Scottish Renaissance country seats as military objects, supported by countless publications on 'Scottish castles' that mingle genuine fortresses promiscuously with sometimes very minor country seats, diminishes rather than enhances their interest. For the focus upon defence distorts an understanding of how they worked as self-sustaining country houses functioning at the centre of their estates, as the centres of the regional economy or as the centres of regional power, culture and hospitality. Their classification as castles isolates them from the contemporary poetic, musical, artistic and literary cultures of the country which, in many cases were stimulated by them.<sup>30</sup>

A preview article of *The Scottish Chateau* in *The Glasgow Herald* newspaper represents very clearly the tensions between the academic, scholarly view, and the popular, market-driven myth of the castle in Scotland:

Prof McKean, who lectures at Dundee University, said Glamis - the Scottish home of the Queen Mother and birthplace of Princess Margaret - is a magnificent chateau but is not a castle. The

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<sup>28</sup> Nicholas Fairbairn **A Life is Too Short. Autobiography Volume 1** (1987) Quartet Books Ltd, London, 184

<sup>29</sup> Charles McKean **The Scottish Chateau. The Country House of Renaissance Scotland** (2001) Sutton Publishing, Stroud

<sup>30</sup> Charles McKean 'A Scottish Problem with Castles' (2006) **Historical Research**, vol. 79, no 204, 168



professor said Culzean Castle, created by the celebrated Robert Adam, is certainly a beautiful building but again is not a castle. To Prof McKean, many such "castles" are in fact manor and tower houses or chateaux. He said: "We have completely mythologised our past and many of the buildings we now call castles never were." .... However, tourism and culture chiefs have played down the issue and said many visitors came in the belief Scotland was a land of castles, not chateaux. A spokesman for the Scottish Tourist Board said: "Scotland is like any other brand, you have to market it as people want to find it." For the overseas market, we focus on a romantic treatment with mists, glens, landscapes, tartans and castles." A spokesman for the National Trust for Scotland, which manages Culzean Castle, said: "A castle is a castle as far as we are concerned."

The statements by the Scottish Tourist Board and NTS spokesmen could not be more explicit in their defence of the mythologizing of Scottish 'heritage'. The representations of heritage by the Scottish Tourist Board, the NTS and Historic Scotland (the 'holy trinity') are critically examined by David McCrone et al in *Scotland the Brand*. Although the three bodies have different organizational structures and cultures, they are all 'gatekeepers', "who mediate and manufacture Scottish heritage, taking, as it were, the deep structure of heritage and laying it out for the consumers."<sup>31</sup>

Interestingly, although English is reputedly the world language with the largest vocabulary, it only has one word - 'castle' – to describe fortified and (mock) castellated buildings, apart from 'tower'. McKean had to borrow the French word 'chateau' to differentiate between a fortified castle ('chateau fort' in French) and a castle-like grand house, whereas most other European languages have two or three 'castle' words in common usage. Even Dutch, a language with a much smaller vocabulary than English, and fewer castles than the UK, has three words: *kasteel*, *burcht* and *slot*, each signifying a slightly different type of building. Struggles over language and representation are not confined to the postmodernist period. Many buildings called 'Castle X' started out as plain X and acquired the appellation of castle sometime in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the legacy of Walter Scott, coupled with the enthusiasm of Queen Victoria, alerted opportunistic house owners to the added value, in terms of status if nothing else, of redefining their house as a castle - for example, Earlshall and Gogar Castles. Queen Victoria's new castle, Balmoral, set the tone for a generation of baronial mansions which could become castles simply by labelling them such. The most obvious tension in terminology currently is between academics and 'the public', the latter being represented by the discourse of popular media. Academics are prone to complain about the simplistic, two-dimensional media representations of their subject – be it modern art or mental health or mediaeval architecture. This is Charles Coulson on mediaeval castles:

...the gap between what is now the accepted academic view and the public perception is constantly widened by the pastiche medievalism of the visual media (in all shades from 'Robin Hood' to fantasy of the Tolkien variety), nourished like the popular literature by a blood-and-guts view as alien to the

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<sup>31</sup> David McCrone, Angela Morris and Richard Kiely **Scotland – The Brand** (1995) Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 73 (and throughout chapter 4)

mature society of the middle ages as it is to its architecture. The picturesque is an authentic visual element and must be accommodated, but not in the form of sado-romanticism.<sup>32</sup>

The ‘pastiche medievalism’ which Coulson mentions is pervasive. He has not referred to the books and films of Harry Potter, which, together with Robin Hood – televised in 2009 as a very popular drama series on BBC 1 – and the *Lord of the Rings* films, generated a widespread interest in fantasy castles, which themselves contain shades of meaning. The thirteen year old boys who would seem to be the target audience of *Robin Hood* presumably know little about castles beyond the crude representations of the visual media, and care even less. Members of castles societies and authors of castles websites, by contrast, are ‘enthusiastic amateurs’ whose interest has been whetted by the visual media and visits to castellated buildings. They tend to be knowledgeable chroniclers of buildings and events, but usually do not attempt critical analysis or quote from peer-reviewed journals. The author of [www.castlesontheweb.com](http://www.castlesontheweb.com) explains his rationale for building a large popular castles website, in terms that would be readily recognizable to his readers:

My love for Castles, I guess, began as a young boy with a passion for reading. My best loved books from those days were never stifled by top ten lists, society favourites or as of late, technical jargon. I can remember growing up with the Black Arrow and Sir Lancelot, and of King Richard's return to Sherwood Forest. I remember the first time I read Ivanhoe, and bits and pieces of others that no longer have names. I can remember the many summer days spent acting out imaginary scenes with a broom-handle sword. I even remember the history lessons taught, that placed its' mark of authenticity to this mystical, magical world. .... Castles of the Web is an homage to those times, both the medieval and those from thirty plus years ago, where a youngster, lying on a bed with book in hand, was captivated by the heraldry, chivalry, and the romance of another place in mind.<sup>33</sup>

At another level, the detailed analysis of the academic historian displays a deeper level of understanding of the complexities of castellology, although scholarly works reflect contemporary historiographical fashions; accounts of castles written before the 1980s seem somewhat two dimensional seen through the prism of a postmodern lens. Joachim Zeune in *The Last Scottish Castle*<sup>34</sup> or Stewart Cruden, whose book *The Scottish Castle*<sup>35</sup> was the accepted authority on Scottish castles in the three decades after its publication, focus so exclusively on the structure of the buildings that their neglect of the human, social aspects appears almost willful. Many of the histories of Scottish castles are as fossilized as the buildings they describe. All action tends to stop at about 1700 and changes thereafter are ignored. It is as if they are pickled, frozen in time. Neal Ascherson, in *Stone Voices*, draws the analogy of the study of the creation of a painting by an art historian; once it is completed, interest in its subsequent history is lost.

What is true about the study of paintings is also true about the study of material culture. Only now, in our own time, are archaeologists forcing themselves to look beyond the ‘processes of creation’ to

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<sup>32</sup> Charles Coulson **Castles in Medieval Society** (2003) OUP Oxford, 1

<sup>33</sup> ‘The Scribe’ July 12 1995 <http://www.castlesontheweb.com/castinfo.html> accessed Oct 2010

<sup>34</sup> Joachim Zeune **The Last Scottish Castles** (1992) Verlag Marie L.Leidorf

<sup>35</sup> Stewart Cruden **The Scottish Castle** (1960) Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited

the long life of successive meanings which followed creation. Some monuments are so prominent and have such an accretion of semiotic biography that it is impossible to ignore it.<sup>36</sup>

Buildings are as dynamic as those who inhabit them; they do not, despite appearances, stand still, but build up a 'semiotic biography'. In this thesis, I will describe many recent changes in Scottish castles, in particular restorations, which are usually (but not always) viewed as improving them. Castles also deteriorate. *The Washington Post*, in an article entitled 'Who Owns Scotland?' reported in 2000 on the financial difficulties of the Chief of the Clan McLeod over the upkeep of Dunvegan Castle: "My family have lived here since recorded time. The castle is a spiritual home for MacLeods around the world. But one needs millions to keep it in repair! I wake up at night worrying about the roof."<sup>37</sup> The roofs of the restored castles examined in this research had already collapsed – or, at best, were leaking rather heavily.

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## REPRESENTATIONS OF CASTLES

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At a certain point the iconic representation, however stylized it may be, appears to be more true than the real experience, and people begin to look at things through the glasses of iconic convention.<sup>38</sup>

In a visual world, we are assailed by images of the castle, in art, the Internet, movies and throughout the media.



FIGURE 6 'THE LONELY TOWER' BY SAMUEL PALMER, 1860S<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Neal Ascherson **Stone Voices** (2002) Granta Books, London, 9

<sup>37</sup> T.R. Reid 'Sale of mountains begs the question: Who 'owns' Scotland?' 6 November 2000 **The Washington Post**

<sup>38</sup> Umberto Eco **A Theory of Semiotics** (1976) Macmillan, London, 204-5

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.culture24.org.uk/history+%26+heritage/time/georgian+and+victorian/art31412>  
accessed February 2011



FIGURE 7 'THE BARD' BY JOHN MARTIN 1817<sup>40</sup>

These wonderfully atmospheric nineteenth century paintings depicting, respectively, pastoral and wild romance are readily recognizable as images that conjure up the essence of 'castle', in Rose Macaulay's terms at least. Both are seen as distant and inaccessible, yet draw the viewer right into the scene. Both tower above the landscape. Martin's castle might be the model for Hogwarts, the somewhat sinister and dangerous castle in the Harry Potter films. Movies present a fantasy version of life, and those which feature castles tend to be especially heavy on fantasy. But there is an alternative view of the castle, in England at least. Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, arch arbiter of historical

architectural taste in the mid twentieth century, described Haddon Hall as 'the English castle par excellence, not the forbidding fortress on an unassailable crag, but the large, rambling, safe, grey, lovable house of knights and their ladies.'<sup>41</sup> The key word here is "English"; it is difficult to think of a Scottish castle which might be described in such terms, although Culzean Castle might just make it, despite its unassailable crag; the lush terraced gardens make it seem 'safe'. Broadly speaking, Scottish castles come in three main forms: the mediaeval fortress, such as Edinburgh Castle, the turreted tower, such as Amisfield, or the Balmoral mansion. None is 'safe, grey and lovable' in the way of a Jacobean English manor.



FIGURE 8 HADDON HALL, 'ENGLISH CASTLE PAR EXCELLENCE'<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Bard.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Bard.jpg) accessed March 2010

<sup>41</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner **Derbyshire** (1978, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 221

<sup>42</sup> [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Haddon\\_Hall\\_04.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Haddon_Hall_04.jpg) accessed March 2010



FIGURE 9A AND B CULZEAN CASTLE<sup>43</sup>



FIGURE 10 AMISFIELD TOWER, TURRETED TOWER<sup>44</sup>



FIGURE 11 BALMORAL CASTLE<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/maidens/culzeancastle/index.html> accessed March 2010

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.scottish-places.info/features/featurefirst9712.html> accessed March 2010

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.scotlandforvisitors.co.uk/balmoralcast.php> accessed March 2010



## The Romance of Ruins

Ruined castles exert a special fascination. During the Romantic Movement and the pursuit of the Picturesque in the second half of the eighteenth century, ruins of all kinds became the objects of poetry and art and literature in Britain and throughout Western Europe; this heightened awareness of the morbid beauty to be found in decaying architecture carried on through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Christopher Woodward, in his all-embracing book on ruins, traced the history of pleasure in ruins from *The Duchess of Malfi* (1617) through Horace Walpole, the Wordsworths, Edgar Allen Poe, William James and others, including Charles Dickens, who extolled the beauty of the Coliseum in his *Letters from Italy* (1846):

It is the most impressive, the most stately, the most solemn, grand, majestic, mournful sight, conceivable. Never, in its bloodiest prime, can the sight of the gigantic Coliseum, full and running over with the lustiest life, have moved one heart, as it must move all who look upon it now, a ruin. GOD be thanked: a ruin!<sup>46</sup>



FIGURE 12 THE MAGDALENENKLAUSE IN MUNICH<sup>47</sup>

Landowners in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries built fake ruins in their estates; even in the twenty-first century a company called Redwood Stone manufactures garden ruins and advertises them in glossy magazines. In 2010 the Queen officially opened 'The Queen's Garden' in Enfield, London, intended as a visitor attraction for the London Olympics, with its backdrop of a fake ruined 14<sup>th</sup> century manor house built on a lavish scale by Redwood Stone<sup>48</sup>. The attraction of the manufactured ruin is longstanding; nearly three hundred years before, in 1725, the Magdalenenklause in Munich was built for the Elector Max Emanuel, and is one of the earliest examples in Europe of a park building consciously designed as a ruin. The hermitage-style building, with its grotto chapel, was intended as a place for the religious contemplation of the transitoriness of earthly lives.<sup>49</sup> In the twentieth century, Rose

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Christopher Woodward *In Ruins* (2002) Vintage, London, 13

<sup>47</sup> Author

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.redwoodstone.com/index.html> accessed October 2010

<sup>49</sup> Information board outside the Magdalenenklause, Englischer Garten, Munich, July 2010

Macaulay's sumptuously illustrated book, *Pleasure of Ruins*, which spanned the world in search of photogenic ruins, was partly the result of a personal Christian reawakening, in which she emphasized the spiritual aspects of ruins as well as the aesthetic. Her book was first published in 1953 and republished in 1964 and 1977 in Britain and the USA; it was also published in Dutch and French. Clearly, the subject of ruins had a wide appeal. Many of the Scottish castle restorers specifically mention the romantic aspect of the ruin which they bought for restoration. The *moral* question of whether to change a ruin through restoration was addressed by Matthew Parris, who restored a large Renaissance house in Spain, l'Avenc, which he and his family bought in 1998:

When you restore a ruin you kill something fragile: a soul breaks free and flies away. All these years l'Avenc had had itself to itself, and now we were barging in with Caterpillar tractors. We thought to come as rescuers, and so we did; but we were also interlopers. We had come to interrupt a building's unhurried and passionate embrace with death; to break its solitude, to spoil its abandon. We had come to wreck the wreck.<sup>50</sup>

The issue about the spiritual and aesthetic value of ruins was officially acknowledged by Historic Scotland in its 2001 Guidance on Principles for the conservation of historic monuments:

Restoration is also likely to be regarded as unacceptable at those monuments that are of outstanding importance for their scenic value in their existing state, that is, as 'ruins in the landscape'. This is especially the case if they have been a significant source of artistic or literary inspiration, or if they have particular resonances at a national or local level in their ruined state<sup>51</sup>

These words, which seem at face value entirely reasonable and uncontroversial, were almost certainly politically motivated in the context of the 'battle' against the restoration of Castle Tioram, which is more fully addressed in chapter four. The decision to restore a ruin raises complex questions involving motivation, representation, wherewithal, historicity, authenticity, integrity and continuity. These are rarely explicitly raised by the owner when a ruined building is restored (apart from authenticity, as will be seen in chapter four), although when Historic Scotland is involved in granting permissions and guiding the restoration there is a greater chance that the process is examined with an eye at least on the last four.

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<sup>50</sup> Matthew Parris **A Castle in Spain** (2005) Viking, London, 36

<sup>51</sup> Richard Fawcett **The Conservation of Architectural Ancient Monuments in Scotland. Guidance on Principles** (2001) Historic Scotland, Edinburgh, point 16.1



FIGURE 13 THE QUEEN OPENING THE “QUEEN’S GARDEN”WITH FAKE RUINS 2010<sup>52</sup>

### The tower in history

The tower, as a specific castle part or castle substitute, has a long history in popular culture, and a special place in the castellology of Scotland, where ‘tower houses’ and castles are often confounded and towers, both ruinous and occupied, feature prominently in the rural landscape. In an extended essay that bridges literary theory, history and psychology, Theodore Ziolkowski described the towers of four great creative minds of the early twentieth century (Yeats, Jeffers, Jung and Rilke) and presented a seductive series of arguments portraying the significance of the tower as an anti-modernist image.<sup>53</sup> He traced the history of the tower from the earliest times: in the sixteenth century the tower was a common subject in European art, particularly the Biblical Tower of Babel, most famously represented by Hans Holbein the Elder, Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Maerten van Valkenborch. The tower became a symbol of religious renewal for Protestantism, through Martin Luther: “It was in his tower in Wittenberg that Martin Luther, in 1513, underwent what German theologians call his *Turmerlebnis* (‘tower experience’) – the insight that the true path to salvation leads though faith.”<sup>54</sup> The history of art and literature is richly populated with towers, symbolizing power, sexuality, refuge and spirituality at various times in different genres.

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.redwoodstone.com/index.html> accessed October 2010

<sup>53</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski **The View from the Tower. Origins of an Antimodernist Image** (1998) Princeton University Press, Princeton

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 19



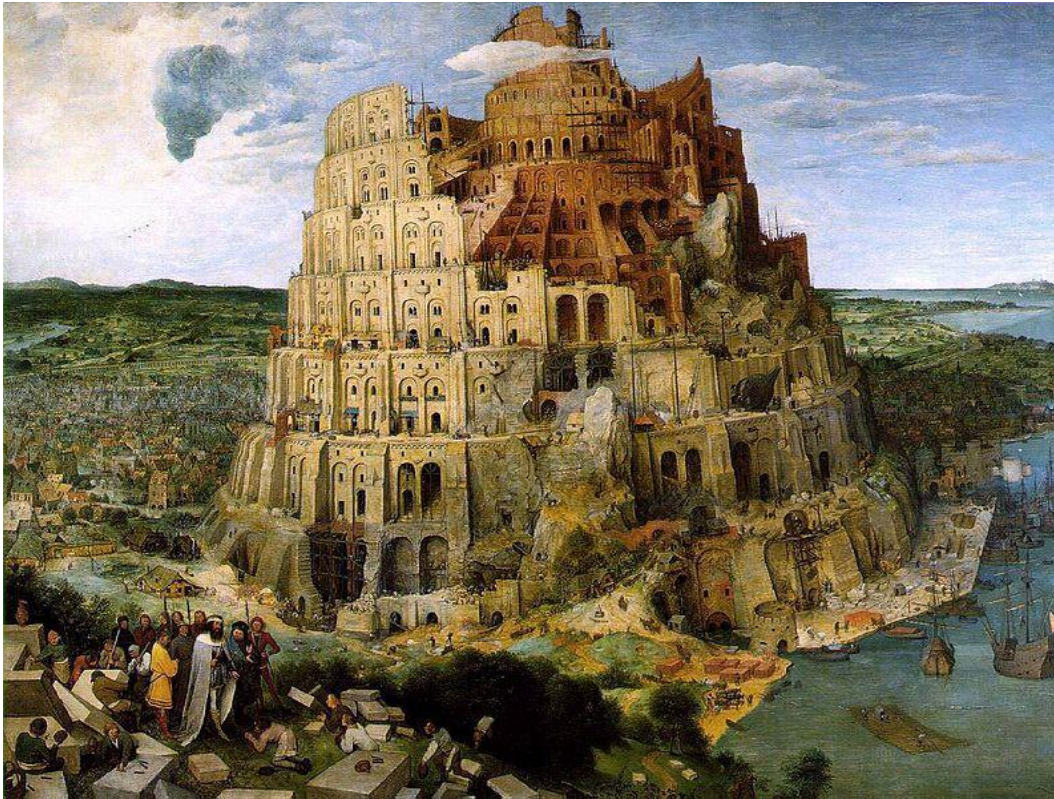


FIGURE 14 THE TOWER OF BABEL BY PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER<sup>55</sup>

William Beckford's gigantic tower of 1801 at Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire<sup>56</sup>, erected as a private temple to the arts, would be worth further analyzing in terms of the psychological symbolism of the desire of a very rich man to build very, very high.

### The laird of the castle

One aspect of castle representation that is particularly salient for Scottish castle owners is the lairdly one. The title of 'laird' is so desirable that several new owners have purchased the title with their castle and use it as part of their identity in daily life. Raymond Morris, an Englishman who bought and partially rebuilt Balgonie Castle, wears the kilt at all times and uses the title of Laird of Balgonie & Eddergoll, referring to his son as the Younger and his wife as the Lady<sup>57</sup>. This use of the title of 'laird' by a new purchaser is allowable, as a Scottish feudal baronetcy can be sold, and this may be one great attraction to purchasers of a Scottish castle – instant membership of the titled classes, sometimes to the amused disdain or even outrage of the 'real' gentry, who may ostracize the newcomers. The Earl of Bradford became so distressed by the sale of fake titles that he set up a website, [www.faketitles.com](http://www.faketitles.com), entitled on the home page, "The site that lifts the lid", to warn people against purchasing them on the internet via [www.e-bay.co.uk](http://www.e-bay.co.uk) and other

<sup>55</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brueghel-tower-of-babel.jpg> accessed March 2010

<sup>56</sup> The building – and subsequent collapse – of Fonthill Abbey's 300 foot tower in 1801 is described by Simon Thurley in chapter 2 of **Lost Buildings of Britain** (2004) Penguin Books, London

<sup>57</sup> Numerous newspaper and magazine articles have been written about Balgonie Castle and the Morris family, e.g. Harry Conroy 'Part of the nation's fabric' **The Herald (Glasgow)** September 15 1994

sites. He called for a boycott of the e-bay website, but his mission has been unsuccessful so far<sup>58</sup>, as 'lord and lady of the manor' titles were readily available in 2009 on the e-bay website for £14.99<sup>59</sup> and the owners of Dunans Castle were selling a limitless number of Laird/Lady titles on the Internet from £39.<sup>60</sup> Referring to a sale of Irish hereditary titles, James Charles Roy, the American restorer of Moyode Castle in Ireland, confessed:

My wife and I sat around mocking the poor, status-seeking dodos who would buy such decadent scraps of snobbery for thousands of dollars, but what I didn't dare reveal was that I could be tempted. Baron of Moyode? It has a nice ring to it, and let's face it, a coat of arms would do wonders for my otherwise pedestrian calling cards.<sup>61</sup>

It is not only the 'common' man who can be seduced by a title. When Nicholas Fairbairn, who was a prominent solicitor and QC and later an MP and Solicitor General for Scotland, acquired Fordell Castle, near Dunfermline, he styled himself Baron Fairbairn of Fordell, although his claim never went to the heraldic court of Lord Lyon for verification.<sup>62</sup>

The stereotype of a castle owner is a rich Scottish man with a long pedigree, probably involving a clan, whose family has owned the castle for generations. He is beautifully captured in this cartoon, below, by Osbert Lancaster<sup>63</sup>. Beside the Lancaster cartoon is a photograph of the current Laird of Balgonie with his son and his pipers. Many castle owners like to dress up in costume and be photographed or painted at their castles, represented as laird and/or lady. All of the owners illustrated in figures 17 - 22 purchased their castles; none is an 'old' owner, although the Queen Mother was brought up in a Scottish castle and could hardly be described as parvenu. Even if not dressed the part, owning the castle brings special advantages in status, according to Ben Younger of Easterheughs Castle: "I love it if I am in a posh department store, perhaps not wearing my smartest clothes, and they ask me for my address..... It makes me feel a lot better when I tell them that I live in a castle." <sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> [www.faketitles.com](http://www.faketitles.com) claims to have been campaigning for seven years; accessed November 2009

<sup>59</sup> [http://cgi.ebay.co.uk/BUY-BECOME-A-TITLE-LORD-LADY-OF-THE-MANOR-OR-SIR-KNIGHT\\_W0QQitemZ110455650124QQcmdZViewItemQQptZUK\\_Collectables\\_WeirdStuff\\_RL?hash=item19b7ab774c](http://cgi.ebay.co.uk/BUY-BECOME-A-TITLE-LORD-LADY-OF-THE-MANOR-OR-SIR-KNIGHT_W0QQitemZ110455650124QQcmdZViewItemQQptZUK_Collectables_WeirdStuff_RL?hash=item19b7ab774c) accessed November 2009

<sup>60</sup> [http://scottishlaird.com/?gclid=CPPe2Y\\_gkZ4CFUtp4wodZ3dQgg](http://scottishlaird.com/?gclid=CPPe2Y_gkZ4CFUtp4wodZ3dQgg) accessed November 2009

<sup>61</sup> James Charles Roy **The Back of Beyond** (2004) Westview Press, Oxford, 11

<sup>62</sup> Patrick Cosgrove and John Calder 'Obituaries: Sir Nicholas Fairbairn' **The Independent** 20 February 1995

<sup>63</sup> James Knox **Cartoons and Coronets. The Genius of Osbert Lancaster** (2008) Francis Lincoln Limited, London, 189

<sup>64</sup> Tim Dawson 'Monumental Triumph' **The Sunday Times** October 13 1996



FIGURE 15 OSBERT LANCASTER'S CARTOON OF THE LAIRD



FIGURE 16 THE LAIRD OF BALGONIE WITH HIS SON, HIS CHAMBERLAIN AND TWO OF HIS PIPERS<sup>65</sup>



FIGURE 17 NOLA CREW OF NEWARK CASTLE<sup>66</sup>



FIGURE 18 JEFFREY & JANET BURN OF BUITTLE TOWER<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.balgoniecastle.co.uk/main/frameset.htm> accessed September 2010

<sup>66</sup> [www.electricscotland.com/nolasusansarner/](http://www.electricscotland.com/nolasusansarner/)

<sup>67</sup> Author



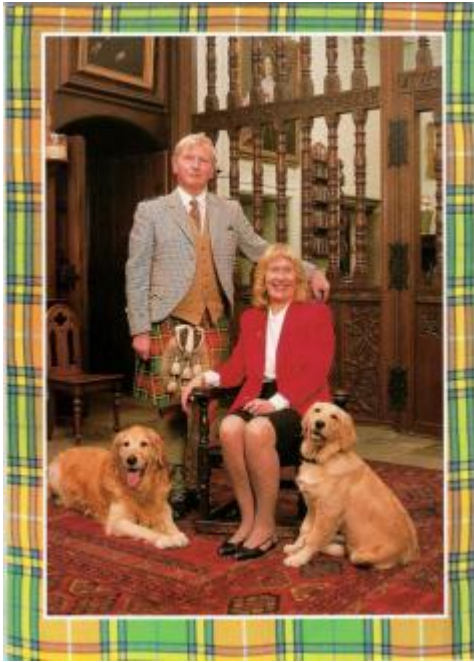


FIGURE 19 THE FORMER BARON &amp; BARONESS OF EARLSHALL



FIGURE 20 THE QUEEN MOTHER BY THE CASTLE OF MEY, 1955

FIGURE 21 THE BARON & BARONESS TWYNHOLME, FORMER OWNERS OF KNOCKBREX CASTLE<sup>68</sup>

Christian Miller's account of her childhood in a Scottish castle (Monymusk)<sup>69</sup> in the 1920s as the youngest daughter of an aristocratic family, confirms many of the stereotypes of castle life. Her memoirs were originally published in *The New Yorker*, addressed to an American audience, who must have been enthralled by her matter-of-fact stories of ancestral ghosts, hidden rooms, a secret garden and mediaeval, dark, draughty passages – and aghast at the harsh life she lived, enduring physical and emotional abuse that would not be out of place in one of the more recent

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.thevillagenews.com/story/8864/> accessed October 2009. Knockbrex Castle is a fake 'toy fort' near Kirkcudbright

<sup>69</sup> Christian Miller *A Childhood in Scotland* (1989) Canongate Classics, Edinburgh

‘misery memoirs’ which have become a twenty-first century genre. The American author Belinda Rathbone’s portrayal of her husband, John Ouchterlonie, Laird of The Guynd, written in 2008, was also addressed to an American audience. She developed and fleshed out the stereotype of the tightfisted Scottish laird devoted to his land:

The landed classes. Since knowing John I have come to better understand the meaning of this term. In Scotland it means not only that these people have land, but, once landed, they intend to stay. Forever. It is almost as much of a personal failure for a Scottish male heir to leave the ancestral home behind him (read, lack of commitment) as it is for an American to stay (read, lack of enterprise). It is no accident that in colloquial Scots, when they ask someone where they live, they ask them where do they “stay”. In Scotland it is not so much that one owns a country house as much as it is the other way round.<sup>70</sup>

Scottish castle owners *did* sell their castles and country houses after WW2, however – but not their land, as will be discussed in chapter four.

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## CASTLES IN FICTION AND THE MEDIA

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The romantic view of ruins seen in Picturesque eighteenth and nineteenth century art was also reflected in poetry, as in this verse of 1766 by John Cunningham:

### **Elegy on a Pile of Ruins**

*In the full prospect yonder hill commands,  
O’er barren heath and cultivated plains,  
The vestige of an ancient abbey stands,  
Close by a ruin’d castle’s rude remains*<sup>71</sup>

More recently, literary fiction has illuminated some of the themes which the academic literature delineates. David Cannadine’s *Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*<sup>72</sup> and David McCrone’s *Scotland - The Brand*<sup>73</sup> both deal with the difficulty which landed families had in hanging on to houses which had become too costly to maintain in the twentieth century. Several post-WW2 novels were structured around that theme. Evelyn Waugh’s novel *Brideshead Revisited*<sup>74</sup>, written in 1944, captured aristocratic decline in the story of Brideshead, an English stately home owned by the Flyte family. Rex Mottram, a wealthy Canadian outsider, understands that the Flytes are heading for financial collapse: “Everyone of that sort is poorer than they were in 1914, and the Flytes don’t seem to realize it....Look at the way they live – Brideshead and Marchmain House

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<sup>70</sup> Belinda Rathbone **The Guynd. A Scottish Journal** (2005) Quantum Lane Press, New York, 28

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Rose Macaulay, **Pleasure of Ruins**, preface

<sup>72</sup> David Cannadine **The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy** (1990) Yale University Press

<sup>73</sup> David McCrone et al **Scotland – The Brand** (1995)

<sup>74</sup> Evelyn Waugh **Brideshead Revisited** (2000 edition) Penguin Books, Harmondsworth

both going full blast, pack of foxhounds, no rents raised, nobody sacked, dozens of old servants doing damn all, being waited on by other servants.”<sup>75</sup>

Waugh’s fictional account is echoed by the reality of the Duke of Bedford’s grandfather, in 1939: “He was still living at Woburn all alone, with fifty indoor, and more than two hundred outdoor, servants. Ten rooms were taken up by the six nurses who watched over him in three shifts.”<sup>76</sup> When he died, death duties meant that Woburn could only be retained by the family if it became a money-making proposition; this is a theme which runs through any study of change in the status and ownership of both English and Scottish castles and great houses since World War 2. It has been claimed that inheritance tax ruined more castles than Oliver Cromwell<sup>77</sup>. Certainly, taxation has caused more changes than many other factors, but the whole story of how and why so many *Scottish* castles declined (more than fifty were demolished after 1950 and more than fifty are still at risk of collapse) and why so many others were rescued from the brink of ruin, lacks a coherent set of threads to weave it together in the socio-historical academic literature.

In 1949 Dodie Smith’s novel *I Capture the Castle*<sup>78</sup> was published to critical acclaim; it became an immediate bestseller and was nominated in The Sunday Times’ ‘Christmas Books of the Year’ feature, boosting sales even further for 1950. The story of a family trapped by poverty in a semi derelict castle and saved by wealthy Americans became a classic romance which has never been out of print and was first staged as a Broadway play in 1952 and made into a successful movie in 2003. In the same year the novel was voted by the British public as one of the nation’s 100 best-loved novels as part of the BBC’s *The Big Read*. Both the quality of Dodie Smith’s writing and the pacy narrative are, of course, critical features in the enduring popularity of the story; but the setting of the romantic, decaying castle captivated readers and touched some nerve in the public consciousness. In 1952 Alan Melville’s play about an aristocratic owner trying to sell his dilapidated castle to a wealthy American woman<sup>79</sup> was released as a popular light comedy film starring Margaret Rutherford and David Tomlinson and the following year P.G.Wodehouse’s novel *Ring for Jeeves*, with a remarkably similar plot, was published<sup>80</sup>. In *Ring for Jeeves* the central theme is the Earl of Rowcaster’s financial problems with Rowcaster Abbey. (“Its architecture was thirteenth-century, fifteenth-century and Tudor, its dilapidation twentieth-century post-World War Two.”<sup>81</sup>). Getting rid of the building rather than saving it was his primary aim; the happy ending involves a wealthy American widow transporting the building to the United States to rebuild it there. Perhaps it was influenced by *The Ghost Goes West*, a 1936 movie directed by René Clair, in which a poor Scotsman sells the family castle to a rich American millionaire, who has the castle moved to the US stone by stone. (The difficulty is that the castle is haunted, and the

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 168

<sup>76</sup> John, Duke of Bedford **A Silver-plated Spoon** (1959) The Reprint Society Ltd, 139

<sup>77</sup> Brian Monteith ‘Pointless tax is a great leveler’ **Evening News (Edinburgh)** May 10, 2002

<sup>78</sup> Dodie Smith **I Capture the Castle** (1996 edition) Virago, London

<sup>79</sup> Alan Melville **Castle in the Air: A Comedy** (1951) Samuel French Limited, London

<sup>80</sup> P.G.Wodehouse **Ring for Jeeves** (1999 edition) Penguin Books. It is not known whether P.G.Wodehouse had seen **Castle in the Air** before writing **Ring for Jeeves**.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 14

ghost moves with the castle to its new locale.) Americans to the rescue was clearly a theme with a popular appeal. Only three of the postwar castle restorers have been Americans, however - Dr John Coyne of Tilqhullie, Ann Tweedy Savage of Harthill and Harry Boswell of Balmuto - and only a handful of Americans have bought 'trophy castles'.

Such is the degree to which the castle restorer has become an almost iconic character in modern times that one has become a fictional hero – or perhaps anti-hero would be more accurate. Jane Stevenson's character, David Laurence, is a conservation architect and the narrator of her witty novella *Light My Fire*<sup>82</sup>. He bought Kilmollich Tower in the north east of Scotland from a pair of elderly farmers with the intention of transforming it as cheaply and quickly as possible. Throughout, Stevenson provides rich details of the interior and its transformation.

The kitchen was ghastly, even by the standards of the house as a whole. The walls were covered in pine-panel-effect vinyl paper, and the floor with brown and white tile-effect vinyl. It was a melancholy thought that it was probably laid over good slate slabs. I wondered if I could get the concrete screeding off without cracking them; probably not.<sup>83</sup>

*Later:* The kitchen was transformed; the walls were warm white, and I'd laid clic-floor laminate in light oak; it depressed the hell out of me on principle, but, until I got round to getting a woodyard to carve up some railway sleepers and did the job properly (my long term plan), it would do; I'd found a kind which had V grooves between the pseudo-planks, which fooled the eye to a surprising extent.<sup>84</sup>

Laurence, the architect with a keen sense of social status and style, is a cheat in every sense of the word and gets his comeuppance in the comic denouement, when the tower explodes just as he is showing a potential purchaser around. A couple of years later, American author Tina Rosenberg was inspired by a visit to Glenapp Castle Hotel to write a novel set in the Castle<sup>85</sup>, featuring the very thinly-disguised tale of its real-life restorers as background to her ghost story; in this novel, however, the owner-restorers are given deferential treatment and presented as heroic. The real-life narrative of the restoration of Glenapp Castle is presented as one of the case studies in chapter four. Both accounts - fictional and autobiographical - of the first view of Glenapp by the would-be restorers emphasise its fairy-tale qualities: ".....the castle floated on air like a mirage with no beginning and no end, melding with the cloudless lapis sky in a blurred, edgeless watercolour. With twin turrets poised like regal bookends, Glenapp Castle seemed the most beautifully proportioned house I had ever seen."<sup>86</sup> Perhaps the 'real' account is a case of life imitating art.

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<sup>82</sup> First in Jane Stevenson's collection of three novellas: **Good Women** (2006) Vintage, London

<sup>83</sup> Ibid page 19

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, page 30

<sup>85</sup> Tina Rosenberg **Glenapp Castle. A Scottish Intrigue** (2009) iUniverse New York

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 7. See chapter four of this thesis, Glenapp case study, for the real-life description

### Castles in the movies

During the 1970s, 80s and 90s – the time of most castle restoration activity – several international movies were filmed using Scottish castles as locations. Doune Castle became a place of pilgrimage for fans of Monty Python and the film, *Monty Python & the Holy Grail*, and, since 2004, Historic Scotland has made commercial capital out of this and staged an annual "Monty Python Day" at the castle, encouraging attendees to dress in 'appropriate Python regalia'<sup>87</sup>. The other castle used for filming was Castle Stalker in Argyll, which appears as "Castle Aaaaarrrrrrggghhh" at the end of the film. Many Scottish castles have featured in internationally released movies, including Floors Castle (*The Legend of Tarzan*, 1984) Muchalls Castle (Zefferelli's *Hamlet*, 1990) and Duart Castle (*Entrapment*, 1999). In addition to the Scottish castles used, innumerable other castles – mostly of the fantasy type – have featured in movies, including the Harry Potter series, the Lord of the Rings series, The Narnia series, and several Disney movies, including *Sleeping Beauty* and *Howl's Moving Castle*. These representations of castles as romantic, mysterious, forbidding places can only have made them more desirable as buildings to acquire for restoration.

### Television and newspapers

The enormously popular television series of Waugh's novel, *Brideshead Revisited*, broadcast on British television in 1981, both fed and reflected the public's interest in pre-war nostalgia, inherited wealth and decaying country houses.<sup>88 89</sup> Whilst the general public loved it, the series was vilified by some academic critics as part of a resurgence of regressive nationalism, for example in Robert Hewison's chapter 'Brideshead Re-visited' in *The Heritage Industry*<sup>90</sup>. It was criticised for its slow, reverential pace, for wallowing in inherited wealth and for being a glorified "soap". A few years later, in 1987, the BBC broadcast Ian Grimble's *Castles of Scotland*, a popular documentary series about twelve of Scotland's most palatial castles, all of which are open to the public. Mark Garnett pricked at the reverential bubble of such broadcasting in his scathing description of television's property programmes in the late 1990s: "The BBC was commissioning a stream of television programmes which catered for the growing army of property pornographers. Reality shows which catered for the growing army of would-be profiteers saturated the daytime

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<sup>87</sup> [http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/propertyplan/propertyoverview.htm?PropID=pl\\_092&PropName=Doune%20Castle](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/propertyplan/propertyoverview.htm?PropID=pl_092&PropName=Doune%20Castle) "take an audio tour of the castle narrated by Monty Python's Terry Jones. Hear the exciting history of the medieval castle and residents, as well stories of the making of Monty Python and the Holy Grail which was filmed at the castle." Accessed November 2010

<sup>88</sup> The series could claim to have had a direct impact on at least one derelict tower: Jeremy Irons, the star of the television series, restored Kilcoe Castle in Ireland in 1998.

<sup>89</sup> See also <http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/B/htmlB/bridesheadre/bridesheadre.htm> website of the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago, accessed March 2008

<sup>90</sup> Robert Hewison *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (1987) Methuen, London



schedules.”<sup>91</sup> At the start of the twenty-first century the heritage debate was harnessed by three BBC *Restoration* programmes, broadcast in 2003, 2004 and 2006, which used a format where viewers could vote in a competition for the ‘most deserving’ historic building or village in need of restoration to receive the necessary finance. Each competing building was championed by a celebrity presenter. These programmes were enormously popular and resulted in spin-off books<sup>92</sup>. The ‘losing’ buildings did not necessarily do well out of the publicity, however, despite Griff Rhys Jones’ confidence that ‘publicity is certainly the oxygen of restoration’<sup>93</sup>. Some deteriorated further after the broadcasts, and became the subject of local wrangling and disillusionment - for example, Brackenhill Tower, near Longtown in Northumbria<sup>94</sup>. Not all viewers were uncritical. Patrick Wright commented:

There can be no doubt that *Restoration* has been a major success. The ratings show well over three million people watching most episodes. People have been phoning in their votes by the thousand. The programme website has been filled with animated debate, and the Restoration fund has pulled in fortunes. Destined to be restored with money from the BBC’s hugely publicised appeal, the winning buildings can surely look forward to becoming the stars of a new kind of makeover show.....which concentrates on the historical building as a single endangered structure, and sees conservation as a wholly good cause: a secular version of church-going, which only a satanic monster would question.<sup>95</sup>

Stuart McDonald, then director of the Lighthouse national centre for architecture and design, was one such ‘monster’: “The way *Restoration* treats the issue of threatened historic buildings – as if they are an event, and their conservation akin to an act of religious charity – is to present the heritage industry as unquestionably a good thing. But is it?”<sup>96</sup> The media certainly believed it to be so. Newspapers and magazines published an increasing number of articles about castle restoration during the 1990s and beyond, which could be unkindly described as aimed at ‘property pornographers’ and ‘would-be profiteers’. There seemed to be no limit to the interest in ‘doing up’ old buildings; in 2010 the BBC broadcast the series *Homes Under the Hammer* and Channel Four Television regularly broadcast *Grand Designs*, *The Restoration Man* and *Country House Rescue*, all concerned with building restoration. Almost without exception, the tone of the articles and television programmes is admiring, congratulatory and supportive of the restoring

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<sup>91</sup> Mark Garnett **From Anger to Apathy. The British Experience since 1975** (2007) Jonathan Cape London, 348

<sup>92</sup> Philip Wilkinson **Restoration. Discovering Britain’s Hidden Architectural Treasures** (2003) Headline Book Publishing, London

Philip Wilkinson **Restoration. The Story Continues** (2006) English Heritage, London

Philip Wilkinson **Restoration Village** (2006) English Heritage, London

The BBC website reprises the three series and offers advice on how to campaign to save a building for restoration: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/programmes/restoration/>

<sup>93</sup> Griff Rhys Jones in Wilkinson, **Restoration** (2003), foreword, 9

<sup>94</sup> Ian Herbert “TV show that saves classic buildings ‘blighting restoration’” May 6 2005 **The Independent**

<sup>95</sup> Patrick Wright, ‘Restoration Tragedy’ **The Guardian**, 13 Sept 2003

<sup>96</sup> Stuart MacDonald ‘The Great Heritage Con’ **The Herald (Glasgow)** 11 July 2004

owners, with titles such as: 'The Art of Renovating. A painter's restoration of his Highland castle is a shining example of how to rescue a piece of our heritage.'<sup>97</sup>

An exception to the overwhelmingly positive reaction to restoration is an article in The Glasgow Herald's 'Think Tank' column whose explicit purpose was to present a 'radical idea' every week and elicit reader responses. Melanie Reid's article is entitled 'Pull down the castles' and contains a series of arguments about the commercialization of Scottish castle heritage, followed by provocative words about restorations:

What's even worse, of course, is when ruins get rebuilt. Restored, re-fertilised by another age of ostentation and self-delusion, these places become statements of wealth and power all over again. Everywhere you go these days, you see the aspirational scaffolding, see the wheel of foolishness turn, see Victorian tat reworked by today's lottery age into their personal footprint of vanity and grandeur. Find a ruin, grow a palace from the crumbling walls. Have your own Balmoral; join this century's castle set.<sup>98</sup>

Of course, such views provoked an angry response from readers, as was the intention. Ingal Maxwell of Historic Scotland described Melanie Reid's attack as 'positively vitriolic' and went on to invoke national pride, historical significance, the power of heritage and economic advantage in a two sentence response; however, he seemingly missed the point by not addressing the issue of restorations:

Does she not realise that these castles are the silent sentinels of our nation's history? In such places decisions were made and events occurred that shaped this nation. Scotland's attraction as a tourist destination relies on its beautiful scenery and its history and heritage, embodied in these castles she would like to destroy.<sup>99</sup>

Finally, representations of castles, as 'silent sentinels of our nation's history' and in all their other manifestations, are important because these images have been responsible for shaping people's desire to own and restore a ruin. Chapter five deals further with newspaper reports of Scottish castle restoration projects and their representations of romance, heritage, hardship and dream fulfillment.

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## THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE CASTLE

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History rewriting now tops whisky production and haggis growing as Scotland's most important industry.<sup>100</sup>

Historiographical approaches to castles have certainly changed since the nineteenth century, and in the 1990s the pace of change increased. Richard Oram, in a paper delivered to the 2008

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<sup>97</sup> J. McBain 'Keepers of our castles' October 29, 2006 **The Sunday Times**

<sup>98</sup> Melanie Reid 'Pull Down the Castles' **The Herald (Glasgow)** 25 April, 2006

<sup>99</sup> (no byline) 'Think again: your chance to join the think tank' May 5, 2006 **The Herald (Glasgow)**

<sup>100</sup> Robert McNeil 'At last – the lowdown on lowlanders' 6<sup>th</sup> June 2006 **The Scotsman**

colloquium of Château Gaillard, the European castle-studies association, described the development of castle studies through the twentieth century, where a longstanding emphasis on chronology and form (particularly by archaeologists), which led to a one dimensional view of castles and ‘an obsession with dating’, was gradually being replaced by a broader perspective. “In this evolving methodology, the emphasis is moving away from chronological typology towards consideration of broader social, cultural, economic and political contexts alongside the structural analysis and an examination of the other physical manifestations of lordship in the surrounding landscape.”<sup>101</sup> Historically, the magnum opus of the literature on Scottish castles is the five volumes of *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland* by McGibbon and Ross, a survey first published in 1887-92<sup>102</sup>. The scale of this work is monumental; the drawings, plans and sketches cover Scotland’s castles in minute detail and have frequently been reproduced since their first publication. After their reprinting in 1977, the books were regularly used by would-be castle restorers looking for a suitable building to buy.<sup>103</sup> McGibbon and Ross’s text may have been informed by a Victorian imperialistic world view that characterized fifteenth and sixteenth century Scots as essentially warlike and their buildings as reflections of this, but their text is considerably more measured and restrained in the expression of this world view than many of those who were later inspired to study castellology. An interesting project would be a comparison of the remaining castles described in McGibbon and Ross in 1892 with their current state, analysing the buildings with then and now illustrations, accompanied by a subsequent history of each; it is surprising that no one has taken this on as a project. Graham Roberts, a local librarian, reproduced all of the McGibbon and Ross illustrations of remaining towers in Dumfries and Galloway in a short book<sup>104</sup> which gives very brief details of each; done in greater depth and on a wider scale, including some analysis, this would be a useful addition to the literature.

For the next hundred years or so, the scholarly literature on castles focused, like McGibbon and Ross had done, on the structure of the buildings. Both form **and** function were important, as long as the latter was military or defensive; particularly, form that characterized fifteenth and sixteenth century Scots as essentially warlike and their buildings as reflections of this. In 1981, Stewart Cruden forecast that McGibbon and Ross’s “classification and chronology of Scottish castellated and domestic architecture ..... by and large will never be upset.” But eventually it was challenged, as established ‘truths’ always are. The representation of the Scottish castle as fortress was critically addressed by Charles McKean, who made a reappraisal of the design of the Renaissance country house/castle in *The Scottish Château* in 2001.

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<sup>101</sup> Richard Oram ‘Castles, Concepts and Contexts: Castle Studies in Scotland in Retrospect and Prospect’ *Château Gaillard* 23 (2008), 349-360

<sup>102</sup> David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross **The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland from the twelfth to the eighteenth century** Volumes 1 – 5 (1999) Mercat Press, Edinburgh (Facsimile of the edition published by David Douglas 1887-92)

<sup>103</sup> E.g. John Coyne: “every holiday was spent in Scotland, exploring with our ‘friends’ Messrs McGibbon, Ross and Tranter” in Clow, 67

<sup>104</sup> Graham Roberts **Towers of Stone. The Fortified Buildings of Dumfries and Galloway** (1993) Dumfries and Galloway Libraries

In England, too, the history of castles was being reappraised. Robert Liddiard reviewed what he termed 'The Battle for Bodiam', an English castle whose history was the focus of dispute among historians as to its status: was it a military fortress or a noble residence built to look like a fortress? Although there had been a longstanding assumption that it was the former, in the 1990s scholarly research demonstrated that Bodiam's fortifications were nothing but ornament and that it was really a grand mediaeval manor house in military disguise, in much the same way that Charles McKean demonstrated that many of Scotland's 'castles' were really 'chateaux'. The case of Bodiam was used by Liddiard as an illustration of the changes that took place in castles studies during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, when the focus changed from defence to status: "The 1990s also saw a stream of progressive publications all overtly contributing in some way to the revisionist cause. Such was the pace of change that as early as 1996 warnings were sounded about a 'bandwagon effect, whereby 'status' replaced 'war' as a simplistic buzzword for the development of castles."<sup>105</sup> Michael Coulson, in *Castles in Medieval Society*, a book which aimed to set the fortress castle within its social and economic context, also downplayed the purely military aspects of castles, even those much earlier than the Renaissance period. "It is anachronistic statist thinking to regard fortresses as the medieval equivalents of modern military 'plant', neglecting their wide social diffusion (and) their complex and ambivalent character..... This mentality constantly taints the 'private castle' with the slur of illicit violence."<sup>106</sup> As is clear from the book's subtitle, Coulson was primarily concerned with English, French and Irish castles, and it is argued by McKean in *The Scottish Chateau* that Scotland is historically a special case. However, the underlying thesis, that castles should be seen primarily as great houses at the centre of large social communities, is valid across European cultures, including Scotland.

In a specifically Scottish context, in *The Scottish Chateau* Charles McKean touched on the iconic representation of the castle within Scottish national identity and the power of language. Through hundreds of books, magazines, websites, television programmes and activities centred in castles, Scots (and non-Scots) consumers demonstrate that the concept of the castle, specifically as a place representative of ancient armed conflict, is enormously significant in popular culture. Historic Scotland has encouraged this view of the castle in its literature and on its website, as has the Scottish Castles Association, and the National Trust for Scotland. "To many Scots, although they are proud of their history, the past remains a pile of dramatic, often gory tableaux."<sup>107</sup> The images in Figures 22 and 23 reflect this. No matter how compelling the academic arguments for a revised conceptualization, it will not be easily discouraged within Scotland. For some of those who have restored castles, the emphasis on military capabilities in their buildings is a central focus, with their architectural descriptions emphasizing defensive features, especially the possibility of pouring boiling oil over 'the enemy', despite McKean's refutation of their function: "when one

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<sup>105</sup> Robert Liddiard **Castles in Context. Power, Symbolism and Landscape, 1066 to 1500** (2005) Central Books, London, 10

<sup>106</sup> Charles Coulson **Castles in Medieval Society. Fortresses in England, France and Ireland in the Central Middle Ages** (2003) OUP, Oxford, 98

<sup>107</sup> Neal Ascherson, **Stone Voices** (2002) Granta Books, London, viii

evaluates their siting, and the manner in which their allegedly defensive panoply of turrets, gunloops, machicolations and crenellations were deployed, against contemporary European militarism, it becomes speedily evident that these castle-like houses were militarily useless.”<sup>108</sup>



FIGURE 22 IMAGE ON HISTORIC SCOTLAND'S WEBSITE, 2010<sup>109</sup>



FIGURE 23 A SIMILAR IMAGE ON THE COVER OF THE NTS ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2007-8<sup>110</sup>

Sarah Speight argued in 2004 that “Castle studies exist in a time-warp. The subject or discipline is jaded by the same argument that has been raging for over twenty years – are castles primarily military and strategic creations or are they domestic and status-enhancing homes?”<sup>111</sup> She went on to develop her argument that it is time for an inter-disciplinary approach to leave behind sterile either/or discussions and synthesize what is known about both the military and the social aspects of castles. In an overview of the sometimes acrimonious debates over the role of the castle, Sarah Speight called for a historiographical pulling together of the polarized approaches to castles studies through multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches. This thesis will attempt to heed that call and bring historical, social and economic analyses to bear on the topic of recent changes

<sup>108</sup> Charles McKean ‘A Scottish Problem with Castles’ (2006) *Historical Research*, vol. 79, no 204, 168

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/> accessed March 2010

<sup>110</sup> [http://www.nts.org.uk/about/downloads/annual\\_review\\_2007-08.pdf](http://www.nts.org.uk/about/downloads/annual_review_2007-08.pdf)

<sup>111</sup> Sarah Speight (2004) ‘British Castle Studies in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries’ *History Compass* 2 (1), 1

in castles. What is missing from the literature, both popular and academic, is an analysis of the changing role and function of the castle since WW2, even though the academic literature has changed in the way it views role and function generally from a historical standpoint.

Also missing historiographically, at least from the archaeological historical literature, are the inhabitants and builders. Serious and thoroughly researched texts on the castles of Scotland, such as those by Joachim Zeune<sup>112</sup> and Stewart Cruden<sup>113</sup>, emphasise construction and structure at the expense of any human factor. A focus on architecture need not necessarily mean losing sight of the social aspects of buildings, however. In the Introduction to *Scots Baronial* Michael Davis<sup>114</sup> proposed that it is undesirable to separate architectural and social history, and although the focus of his work is primarily architectural, the human factor is always present in his writing; he paints a lively picture of individual architects' efforts, through grandiose plans, to please their wealthy clients. Davis has a short section on twentieth century castle restorations in his extended essay in which he describes and evaluates some of the projects carried out by 'hobby restorers' and 'enthusiasts' between 1958 and 1995. Until very recently, the only other scholarly article on Scottish castle restoration was David Walker's wide-ranging and detailed review of the 'Adaptation and Restoration of Tower Houses' in which he traced the history of a large number of significant castle restoration projects from 1660 to the mid-1990s, with a focus on the changes which took place in the buildings and why, from the perspective of a Historic Buildings Council Chief Inspector. In April 2011, *Renewed Life for Scottish Castles* by Richard Fawcett and Allan Rutherford of Historic Scotland was published, as part of the 'Scottish castles Initiative' which was launched by HS in 2009. Their book looks at the history of conservation and restoration of Scottish castles, using case studies of six castles which have been conserved at various times as ruins and eleven castles which were restored in the twentieth century. The explicit purpose is to "set out the thinking of the state's advisers and of the owners and developers at particular times in the context of specific sites and specific projects."<sup>115</sup> The focus is on the individual buildings, with details of their history and of technical difficulties and decisions in the conservation and restoration processes.

This thesis will attempt to extend the scope of Davis's and Walker's reviews, by treating the history of restorations in Scottish castles as a social, political and economic phenomenon, highlighting the personal histories of the restorers in addition to the architectural structures they rebuilt.

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<sup>112</sup> Joachim Zeune **The Last Scottish Castles** (1992) Verlag Marie L. Leidorf

<sup>113</sup> Stewart Cruden **The Scottish Castle** (1960) Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited

<sup>114</sup> Michael C. Davis **Scots Baronial. Mansions and Castle Restorations in the West of Scotland** (1996) Spindrift Publishing, Ardrishaig.

<sup>115</sup> Richard Fawcett and Allan Rutherford **Renewed Life for Scottish Castles**, xiv

### The popular literature on castles

The academic literature on castles may occupy the scholarly high ground, but the majority of readers interested in the topic of castles turn to the popular literature, which reflects their idea of what castles should be. Around one hundred popular books about Scottish castles in general have been published since 1945, ranging from brief guides with minimal text, to lavish coffee table books. Some provide a visual feast of gorgeous photographs, but few give much detail and many are marred by inconsistencies and errors. Most conform to the 'grim fortress' view of Scottish castles. Maurice Lindsay's book, *The Castles of Scotland*<sup>116</sup>, opens with the sentence, 'Man is a fighting animal'. This presupposition of innate aggression among humans is not generally upheld by anthropological, psychological or sociological evidence or theories, although the complexities of the topic are aired frequently in the social sciences. Maurice Lindsay was, by all accounts<sup>117</sup>, a renaissance man, highly cultured, widely read and intelligent. Why he should open a serious book with such a facile generalization is mysterious, but, as a punchy line to start a book on castles, it probably reflects the views of many of its readers.

Other Scottish castles books have a particular emphasis, such as ghosts or clans; a few authors do acknowledge the sumptuousness of architecture and internal fittings of the grand castle palaces of Scotland (for example Ian Grimble<sup>118</sup> and Richard Dargie<sup>119</sup>) There is a 'trainspotting' element to some castles books, with lengthy listings. The fourth edition of *The Castles of Scotland* by Martin Coventry<sup>120</sup> is the most wide-ranging single volume work available in its encyclopaedic coverage of 2,700 buildings and sites. It is potentially a valuable addition to the popular literature, but has some major shortcomings, even for the most superficial reader. Quality has been sacrificed for quantity. The majority of entries are for long demolished, non-existent buildings and some are extremely speculative, even as to whether a building ever existed at a described location. Coventry apparently used Pont maps as the basis of a number of entries of non- extant buildings, but in many cases (such as Grey Coat Peel in the Borders) cannot say who owned it or when it disappeared or exactly where it was. This book is most likely to be used by people who wish to visit castles across Scotland; one can only imagine the disappointment of readers who find entry after entry for castles which do not exist. If scarcely even a pile of stones marks the site, as is the case with around sixty per cent of the entries, there seems no point in having the information in the main text. Supposed hauntings are mentioned in 260 of the entries. Coventry evidently takes this seriously, as distinctions are made between ghosts and 'brownies' (from whose visitations Cranshaws Castle apparently suffers). *The Castles of Scotland* is also doubtless responsible for the

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<sup>116</sup> Maurice Lindsay **The Castles of Scotland** (1986) Constable, London

<sup>117</sup> Lesley Borley (ed) **Dear Maurice. Culture and Identity in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Scotland. A tribute to Maurice Lindsay on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday** (1998) Tuckwell Press Limited, East Linton. This book of essays contains several biographical accounts of Lindsay's life.

<sup>118</sup> Ian Grimble **Castles of Scotland** (1987) BBC. The book of the television series

<sup>119</sup> Richard Dargie **Scottish Castles and Fortifications** (2004) GW Publishing

<sup>120</sup> Martin Coventry **The Castles of Scotland** (2006, 4<sup>th</sup> edition) Birlinn Limited, Edinburgh

widespread and mistaken media assertion that Scotland has around 3,000 castles<sup>121</sup> The true figure is nearer 1,500, counting all types, including mediaeval fortresses, tiny towers, very ruinous buildings and nineteenth century castellated mansions, although in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century there were probably 5,000 – 6,000 buildings which would now be called castles.<sup>122</sup> The figure of 3,000 seems to hold a strange attraction: Belgium, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Bavaria and Spain are also said each to have 3,000 castles, on various websites. If Coventry's entries for buildings which no longer exist are discounted and for those which cannot be described in any way as castles – not in name, history or appearance, such as Meigle House in Perthshire, described as an 18<sup>th</sup> century altered classical mansion and 'possible site of castle or stronghold' – the number drops by about two-thirds.

Nigel Tranter's five volume work *The Fortified House in Scotland* covers 663 buildings, which he defines as the ' fortalices, lesser castles, peel towers, keeps and defensible lairds' houses'<sup>123</sup> Mike Salter also produced a series of five books on the castles of Scotland<sup>124</sup> which contain, on the whole, much more thorough and accurate information than Coventry, but also in the form of listings of facts without historical analysis. He lists and describes 1541 castles altogether, twice as many as McGibbon and Ross, who include 769 castles. These books were used as bibles by the would-be castle restorers of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, but since the expansion and greater accessibility of the Internet, around the Millennium, much more information became available online. Since 2008, the RCAHMS website has been easily searchable with information and pictures on all of the castles of Scotland, including a bibliography for each, making information much more accessible for potential castle restorers. (Coventry, McGibbon and Ross are mentioned in most entries, but Salter, unaccountably, is not). The best of the popular books are well-researched accounts containing carefully detailed and lengthy descriptions and analysis of specific areas, for example Alastair Maxwell-Irving's *The Border Towers of Scotland. The West March*<sup>125</sup>, although these tend not to be up to date with or show an awareness of the scholarly debates about form and function. Between 1947 and 1966 the popular *Scottish Field* glossy magazine published a regular series of articles entitled *Scottish Country Houses and Castles* by Sheila Forman, and in 1967 a collection of her articles was published in book form.<sup>126</sup> Since 1897 *Country Life* had also published similar articles. The aim of these articles was to appeal to the aspirations of the readers, most of whom were middle class but not necessarily rich enough to own a large country house or a castle. In 1953 and 1954 *Country Life* Books published two significant books: *Scottish Castles of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* by Oliver Hill<sup>127</sup>, a lavishly illustrated book, and John

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<sup>121</sup> If one types "Scotland 3000 castles" into the Google search engine, hundreds of articles claiming that Scotland has 3000 castles are listed.

<sup>122</sup> Charles McKean **The Scottish Chateau**, 23

<sup>123</sup> Nigel Tranter **The Fortified House in Scotland volume 1** (1965) Mercat Press, Edinburgh, preface

<sup>124</sup> Mike Salter **The Castles of Scotland Series** (5 volumes) (1993 – 95) Folly Publications, Malvern

<sup>125</sup> Alastair M.T. Maxwell-Irving **The Border Towers of Scotland. The West March** (2000) Alastair M.T. Maxwell-Irving, Blairlogie

<sup>126</sup> Sheila Forman **Scottish Country Houses and Castles** (1967) George Outram & Co., Perth

<sup>127</sup> Oliver Hill **Scottish Castles of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries** (1953) Country Life Books, London



Fleming's *Scottish Country Houses and Gardens Open to the Public*.<sup>128</sup> Although such magazines and books did not have a wide circulation, they reached an audience whose financial clout and influence in forming tastes and behaviour patterns was presumably disproportionately large; the three categories of reader profiles provided in the 2008 media pack of *Country Life* have probably been both implicitly and explicitly targeted throughout the history of the magazine (although it is difficult to see what the differences are between the 'traditionalists' and the 'core country' readers):

**Traditionalists** – have a strong affinity with *Country Life* because it endorses the traditional values they hold dear. They would agree they are 'a country person at heart'. They are passionate about the countryside, architecture and environmental issues and they look forward to reading each issue of *Country Life*. They see themselves as custodians of the house and land they have inherited.

**High-earning aspirants** – high net-worth individuals who have earned their wealth. They live in towns but would prefer to spend more time in the country. They are discerning, ambitious, image conscious and prepared to pay more for quality.

**Core Country** – They are united by a love of the countryside and are firm believers in tradition. They are passionate about all aspects of rural life and play an active role in their local community. As affluent homeowners they are able to enjoy their extensive investments.<sup>129</sup>

Among those who bought and restored a Scottish castle are doubtless regular readers of *Scottish Field* and *Country Life*. Increasingly over the period, the media – glossy magazines, newspapers, movies, television and, in later years, the Internet – published 'property porn' (a term regularly used by journalists from the mid-1990s, to describe seductively attractive images of properties, which generate fantasies of ownership<sup>130</sup>). In chapter five, published restoration narratives are examined; these gave concrete examples of what had been done and what could be done and served to inspire and inform would-be restorers and dreamers.

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### CASTLE REBUILDING AND REOCCUPATION BEFORE 1945

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In the 1780s a retired East India Company administrator, George Paterson, re-occupied the colossal fifteenth century tower house of Castle Huntly, which he had bought in 1777. He added only a small single-storey frontal addition to supplement the original accommodation, and provided dummy turrets and a circular prospect house at the parapets. The decision to retain and restore the ancient tower was perhaps a chivalrous gesture to his wife, the Hon. Anne Gray, whose family's principal seat it had been.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> John Fleming *Scottish Country Houses and Gardens Open to the Public* (1954) Country Life Books, London

<sup>129</sup> <http://www.countrylife.co.uk/> accessed September 2008; no longer accessible November 2010

<sup>130</sup> For example: Julie Davidson 'The Market Leader in Property Porn' October 11, 1996 **The Herald (Glasgow)**, an article about *Country Life* magazine

<sup>131</sup> David Walker, 'The Adaptation and Restoration of Tower Houses; An Historical Review from the Reign of Charles II to the Present' in Robert Clow (ed.) **Restoring Scotland's Castles** (2000), chapter one. Castle Huntly is now owned by the State and used as a prison.

Castle restoration is not a new phenomenon. David Walker, in the 'Adaptation and Restoration of Tower Houses' clearly demonstrates this.<sup>132</sup> 'Adaptation' is the significant term for most of the building work carried out in the two centuries after 1660 – late mediaeval stone towers tend to be inconvenient buildings for family living and castle owners have always altered and added to their buildings, as social needs and architectural fashions have changed. George Paterson was unusual in his restoration of fifteenth century Castle Huntly tower in the 1780s, at a time when Adam mansions were consigning many towers to unfashionable oblivion. However, as Walker points out, "there always has been a school of thought which valued the tower house as a powerful symbol of ancient lineage."<sup>133</sup> This school of thought has been thoroughly explored by Charles McKean in *The Scottish Chateau* and by Charles Wemyss, who proposed that the ancient Scottish nobility, like the French *noblesse d'épée*, retained the old styles of building as symbolic of their lineage, while the newly wealthy and ennobled (the *noblesse de robes* in France) were building new country houses in the classical style<sup>134</sup>. It was not until 1843 that the first 'pure' restoration of a roofless tower, without additions or alterations, was carried out, at Cleish. This was followed by the significant rebuilding of ruinous Kilberry castle (which was essentially a newbuild) and by a trickle of other antiquarian restorations (Castle Stewart 1869; Mochrum 1873; Barnbogle 1881), all done for 'old' landowners to enhance their estates – Barnbogle was restored to create a secluded library annexe, for example. But an attempt to sell Broughty Castle, a coastal fortress near Dundee as a restoration project failed: "By 1821 it was a roofless ruin and was offered for sale in the Dundee, Perth and Coupar Advertiser on 21 December as a potentially 'delightful residence' capable of restoration at small expense, or 'which would make an excellent situation for an inn'. There were no takers."<sup>135 136</sup> This is a nice illustration of changes in attitudes towards ruined castles. If it had been for sale at any time from the 1970s, a century and a half later, there would almost certainly be intense interest and competition to buy and restore it from a variety of people with no landowning connections; a local community group would probably also be formed to try to save it, as was the case with Portencross Castle, a somewhat similarly situated building, in 1998. The reasons why these changes in attitude and behaviour came about are a complex mix of economic circumstances, social class changes and media involvement, coupled with the interventions of a number of individual campaigners and architects.

In 1845–52 Robert William Billings published *The Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland* in four volumes, influencing and inspiring the Scots Baronial castle designs of the architect David Bryce (including Glenapp Castle; see the restoration narrative in chapter four).

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<sup>132</sup> The information on restorations in this section has been taken from Walker, *ibid*, unless otherwise referenced.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, page 1

<sup>134</sup> Charles Wemyss **A Study of Aspiration and Ambition: The Scottish Treasury Commission and its Impact upon the Development of Scottish Country House Architecture 1667-1682** (2008) Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Dundee

<sup>135</sup> Maurice Lindsay **The Castles of Scotland**, 102

<sup>136</sup> It was bought by the War Office in 1855, at a time of renewed threat from the French and was surrounded with batteries of large naval guns. It remained in military use until 1949. In 1969 Broughty Castle opened as a museum operated by Dundee Council.

“Billings’ own customary baronial idiom, ..... though truly bizarre, was also inventive, wild and dramatic”<sup>137</sup> He designed Castle Wemyss (now demolished) and enlarged Dalzell house with “muscular corbelling, zanily shaped window heads, zig-zagging string courses, 3-D glazed oculi, idiosyncratic carved detail, and, in the stable court, monopitched crow stepped gables.”<sup>138</sup>

Billings’ architectural work, his inspiration of other architects and his published volumes, together influenced the look and spread of the Victorian castellated baronial mansion across Scotland. At the time when Billings was publishing, David McGibbon and Thomas Ross were at the very start of their architectural careers. In 1887 – 92, when both were in middle age, they published the five volumes of *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century*. Their aim was not simply to provide a detailed description of the state of Scotland’s castles, however; this was a plea based on dismay, a precursor of the late twentieth century heritage campaigns:

“It is greatly to be regretted that most of our ancient edifices are rapidly passing away, either from natural decay or other destructive causes. Even since our sketches were made, many have disappeared either in whole or in part. The neglect with which they are generally treated probably arises, to some extent, from their bearing on the architectural and natural history of Scotland not being sufficiently understood and appreciated. We are not without hope that this work may serve to direct the attention of proprietors and others to the value of our ancient domestic remains, and may thus help to preserve some of them from the decay and demolition which at present threaten speedily to overtake the greater number. Such a result would be most gratifying, not only to us, but to everyone interested in our national history.”<sup>139</sup>

Were they right to be concerned and were their hopes realized - did proprietors consequently take action to save their castles? In the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s McGibbon and Ross were credited with fostering interest in castle restoration, along with Tranter’s five volumes, and may thus have been at least indirectly responsible for several projects. But how much impact did they have in the last quarter of the nineteenth century? It can be argued that the publication of their five volume magnum opus was one pivotal point in the history of building conservation in Scotland. On a simple count of castles restored from a ruinous state between 1800 and 1945, the majority of rebuilding was carried out between 1887 and 1920. In the 30 years or so after publication 29 castles were rescued from ruin or dereliction and restored in some way or another – an average of one a year. However, although McGibbon and Ross were running a busy architectural practice, they failed to break into the prestigious country house/castle restorations market themselves (apart from Crosbie Castle) and did not manage to capitalize on their reputations as architectural experts. David Walker, in his detailed history of McGibbon and Ross’s architectural practice, cannot account for this failure: “Their fame as authors brought in a flood of

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<sup>137</sup> Michael C.Davis **Scots Baronial. Mansions and Castle Restorations in the West of Scotland** (1996) Spindrift Publishing, Ardrishaig, 116

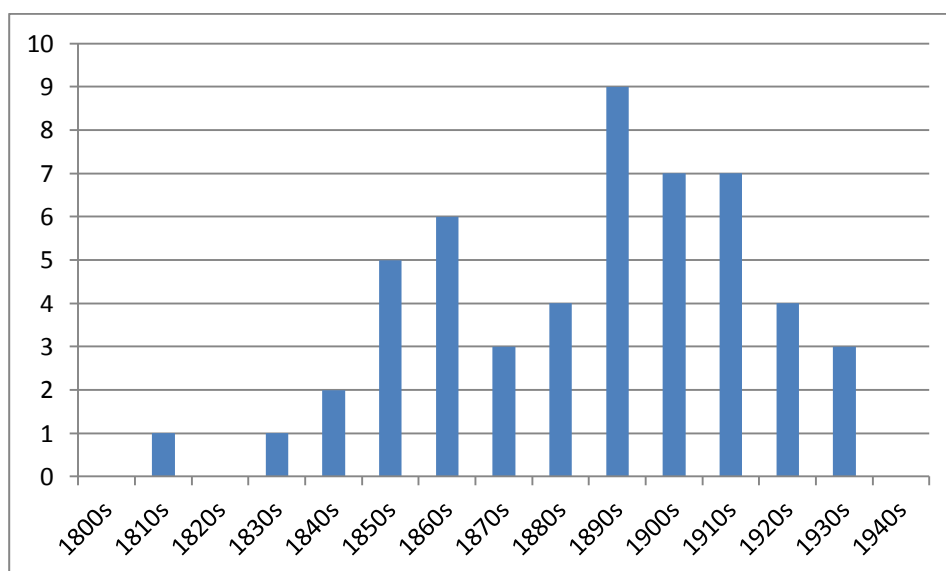
<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 22

<sup>139</sup> **McGibbon and Ross** 1887-92 Volume 1 Preface page vii

commissions, some of the greatest promise, which for one reason or another either did not go ahead or were handed on to others to finish.”<sup>140</sup>

1830s	1	Drumry,
1840s	2	Cleish, Crookston,
1850s	5	Broughty, Fatlips, Kinnaird, Mains, Penkill,
1860s	6	Balhousie, Balthayock, Castle Stuart, Darnick, Haggs, Kellie,
1870s	3	Kellie, Old Place of Mochrum, Rothsay
1880s	4	Barnbogle, Doune, Garth, Stobhall,
1890s	9	Barcaldine, Borthwick, Cairnbulg, Cessnock, Crosbie, Dalcross, Earlshall, Kilcoy, Wester Kaimes
1900s	7	Barra, Bavelaw, Birse, Colstoun House, Dean, Plane, Schivas,
1910s	7	Balmanno, Coxton, Duart, Dunderave, Dunrobin, Eilean Donan, Hunterston,
1920s	4	Auchterhouse, Dunnottar, Ferniehirst, Fingask
1930s	3	Arnage, Stair House, Stenhouse Mansion
1940-5	0	

**Table 1 Scottish castle restorations (including additions) carried out between 1830 and 1945<sup>141</sup>**  
**N.B. ‘Restoration’ is here used loosely, to include buildings which were saved from dereliction but not reoccupied (e.g. Crookston)**



**Table 2 Scottish castle restorations (including additions) carried out between 1830 and 1945**

McGibbon and Ross’s younger contemporary, Robert Lorimer, whose father’s help was acknowledged in the preface to volume one ‘for information in connection with Kellie Castle’,

<sup>140</sup> David Walker ‘The Architecture of MacGibbon and Ross: The Background to the Books’ in David J.Breeze (ed) **Studies in Scottish Antiquity** John Donald Publishers Ltd, Edinburgh, 431

<sup>141</sup> The information has mainly been gathered from David Walker’s chapter in Clow

seized the opportunities to work on castles and country houses. It is likely that he received commissions because of his skillful social networking (he was friendly with the wealthy Glasgow shipowner William Burrell, among other powerful people), and his personal qualities, although his commissions fell off in later years.

In his earlier years an engaging personality and an infectious enthusiasm had got him by, although as early as 1904 unwillingness to accept unwelcome instructions from clients had lost him the commission at Fairnalie where he refused to demolish the old house. But in his later years he could be overbearing. Lack of tact in his work at Hatton Castle for Burrell in 1916 resulted in the loss of the commission, and, painfully, Burrell's friendship..... and at Fingask, the Gilroys found him 'too dictatorial' and engaged the more biddable J Donald Mills, as did the Valentines at Auchterhouse. Alfred G Lochhead, who replaced McKay as chief draughtsman, recalled that Lorimer could be 'terrible with clients: in the course of a disagreement on the design he said to one 'This house will be remembered because I designed it, not because you paid for it' - he actually said that'.<sup>142</sup>

Perhaps McGibbon and Ross displayed even more maladroitness towards clients in order to fare worse than Lorimer. Success in architectural practice is as much about social and political skills and clever project management as design talent – only the very best architects successfully combine both. Lorimer worked on sixteen Scottish castles and was certainly the most productive architect of his time in the field of conservation architecture. From the age of fourteen, family holidays were spent restoring Kellie Castle in Fife, on which his father had taken a lease. This was something that would strongly influence his early architectural work. In addition to his castle restoration work in Scotland, Lorimer also restored Lympne Castle in Kent, England, in 1910. Walker claims that Lorimer's restorations were authentic, and so they were in relation to other architects – he was an admirer of William Morris – but McKean sees it differently. Here he is referring to Arts and Crafts architects like Sir Robert Rowand Anderson, Sir Robert Lorimer and their successors:

However picturesque their 'restorations' might have been, and however faithful to the Arts and Crafts philosophy of 'truth to materials' (another death knell for harling), they were fundamentally unscholarly. They 'restored' what they saw solely on the basis of intuition and sensibility.<sup>143</sup>



Figure 24 Earls Hall Castle, exterior and interior showing Lorimer's Falkland Screen<sup>144</sup>

<sup>142</sup> [http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.php?id=200052](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200052) accessed September 2010

<sup>143</sup> McKean, **Scottish Chateau**, 260

Lorimer was the most prolific architect working on restorations, but many others contributed to the re-building of the castles listed in Table x for various grandees. Matthews and MacKenzie restored Inglismaldie for the Earl of Kintore in 1882; the firm of Ross and MacBeath restored both Kilcoy and Kinlochaline in 1890 and Sir John Burnet took on Duart for Sir Fitzroy MacLean. Eilean Donan, the stereotypical shortbread tin castle, was restored from 1912 – 1932 by George Mackie Watson for Colonel MacRae Gilstrap. DIY projects without architects by relatively badly-off new owners from the (lower) middle classes had not yet begun, but in the heyday of twentieth century restorations in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, a significant minority of ‘new owner’ projects were carried out without using a firm of architects as project managers, although most had a friendly architect from whom they bought plans and occasional advice. On the other hand, thirteen of the castles restored after WW2 were bought by architects, who possessed, presumably, the knowledge and professional expertise to organize the work independently.

In 1937 Robert Lister Macneil, an American architect who had become chief of the Clan Macneil in 1914, bought back the Estate of Barra and the ruined mediaeval Kisimul Castle and moved with his family to Barra. Robert Lister had been brought up in America by his struggling artist father and ‘lovely mother who shared those struggles’, on romantic stories of the past and “the story of the family’s loss of the wonderful old ruined castle and the Clan’s homeland, and of his own forlorn ambition to regain them.”<sup>145</sup> As a boy he made models of the castle and dreamed of achieving his father’s ambition. His description of his ecstatic reception by the islanders of Barra<sup>146</sup> when he moved there with plans to restore Kisimul Castle is reminiscent of the passage in Queen Victoria’s diary in which she recorded a reception at Taymouth Castle given for her and Prince Albert in 1842. She ended with the words, “It seemed as if a great chieftain in olden feudal times was receiving his sovereign. It was princely and romantic.”<sup>147</sup> The picture was somewhat debunked by Robert Lister’s son, Ian Roderick Macneil, in the preface to the second edition of Robert Lister’s memoirs, where he claimed that there was ‘considerable resentment at the near-royal reception accorded to the Macneil family on its return in 1938’ Whatever the truth of his relations with the islanders may be, Robert Lister found around twenty-five Barra men willing to work with him on the repair and restoration of the ruined castle. Work was stopped by the outbreak of WW2, but he was pleased with what had been achieved so far by way of removal of debris and masonry repair: “The castle was still only a ruin but it no longer had the appearance of a neglected ruin. Everything was orderly and clean.”<sup>148</sup> Lister restarted work on Kisimul in 1956, this time determined to build a habitable house for him and his wife within the ruins. His narrative is presented in chapter five. Lister was motivated to work on the restoration of Kisimul by his lifelong passion for clan heritage, but at this period few others were interested in rescuing historic castles and towers. Only a handful of projects were commenced in the period 1920 – 19(39)45: “tower-house restorations ....were rare between the wars. The general perception at that period

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<sup>144</sup> Author

<sup>145</sup> The Macneil of Barra **Castle in the Sea** (1964, second edition 1975) Vantage Press, New York, 12

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 161

<sup>147</sup> Sarah Tytler **Life of her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen** volume 1 (2007 edition) BiblioBazaar, London, 191

<sup>148</sup> The Macneil of Barra **Castle in the Sea**, 167

seems to have been that tower houses were no longer suitable for modern living as a result of the greater importance attached to health, sunlight and labour-saving planning”<sup>149</sup>

Walker emphasized the importance of the Ancient Monuments Act of 1900 for the subsequent security of ruined castles – the first acquisitions were made in 1906 and Thomas Ross, of McGibbon and Ross, became one of the first inspectors. Between 1906 and 2000, sixty castles were taken into care, the majority in the 1930s and 1950s. By 1934 thirty-three were in care, listed in a specially compiled article for the readers of *S.M.T. magazine*, (*‘A Monthly Magazine For All Who Travel By Road Or Rail’*). “In presenting this volume to our readers we venture to express the hope that it will inspire in them a desire to visit and become intimate with the many ancient buildings in which Scotland is so rich.”<sup>150</sup> The democratizing of access to Scottish castles was beginning, but initially only to the ruinous properties.

Before 1945, most castles were owned by members of the old landowning classes or the nouveaux riches (who would sooner or later become absorbed into the landowning classes, often hurried along by marrying their sons and daughters into the aristocracy). These owners sometimes rescued and rebuilt their derelict and decaying buildings, for a variety of reasons which were usually tied in with their wealth, class and status, and were often pragmatic in nature – e.g. Fatlips for a shooting box, Maybole for a factor’s house, Branxholme to be remodeled and updated by William Burn, Earlshall as a symbol of Scottish lairdship for a wealthy merchant. One quite frequent reason for the need to rebuild was fire, a much more common occurrence in the days of candles, open fires and gas lamps - for example, Monzie Castle in Perthshire, restored and remodeled by Robert Lorimer in 1908. After the War, the majority of restorers were new purchasers and therefore not members of the ‘old’ landowning class (with the exception of one of the first, the Queen Mother, in 1950) The few landowners (eight in total) who carried out a restoration on a ruined castle on their land did so for various reasons; the two aristocratic old owners were aided by Trusts whose *raison d’être* is to restore historic buildings in order to use them for holiday letting. These were Barns Tower, owned by Elizabeth Wemyss, Lady Benson, who was aided by the Vivat Trust in the restoration and Rosslyn Castle, restored by the Earl of Rosslyn and subsequently managed by the Landmark Trust. Most owner restorers after WW2, both new and old, were driven by motives that were more to do with a romantic vision of life in Scotland and a desire to rescue what they perceived as part of their heritage in danger, than with pragmatism or commercial enterprise.

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<sup>149</sup> Walker in Clow, 18

<sup>150</sup> **Scotland’s Ancient Heritage** (1934) The Special Summer Number of the *S.M.T. Magazine*, Foreword

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## CONCLUSION

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This chapter has traced the meanings and representations of 'castle' through the popular media – newspapers, magazines, books, movies, plays, television and art – and through the academic, scholarly literature. Multiple representations have co-existed in both spheres, but the main themes have been romanticism, closely followed by adventure and military might. These three themes have been inspirational for the restorers of the second half of the twentieth century, as will be shown in chapters three and four. Their precursors, the castle restorers of the nineteenth century, had different, sometimes more pragmatic reasons for their projects. While they were undoubtedly shaped by the social and personal circumstances in which they lived, it is tempting to see the history of changes in castles in the nineteenth century as the history of Great Men: Billings, McGibbon, Ross, Lorimer and others, whose extraordinary activities had such an impact on Scottish architecture – and, indeed, beyond, to their twentieth century successors. These individuals, and the campaigning bodies they supported, are examined in the next chapter, which also looks at the wider social, political and economic context of the period from 1945 – 2010, including the heritage battles of the 1960s and 70s.



## CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXT & HERITAGE- WHY DID CHANGE FLOURISH?

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This country is gripped by the perception that it is in decline. The heritage industry is an attempt to dispel this climate of decline by exploiting the economic potential of our culture, and it finds a ready market because the perception of decline includes all sorts of insecurities and doubts.....At best, the heritage industry only draws a screen between ourselves and our true past.<sup>151</sup>

In this chapter the political and social context of Scotland and the rest of the UK in the period from 1945 – 2010 is analysed, including the growth of the ‘heritage industry’ (a term coined by Robert Hewison, who viewed it as being symptomatic of a country in decline in the 1980s), the role of campaigning individuals and organizations, and the chronology of conservation legislation and its impact on practice. The role of the media, which has already been examined in terms of representations of castles in chapter one, is inseparable from the heritage debate and the way that campaigning individuals and bodies were able to disseminate their messages. In Europe and beyond things were different in many ways, particularly in terms of the damage inflicted by wars and the political changes brought about by Communism – but also, paradoxically, similar in other ways. The chronology of European conservation charters and agreements and their influence is assessed, and similarities and differences in the treatment of heritage and historic buildings are described and analysed.

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### THE SOCIAL CONTEXT: SOCIAL, POLITICAL & ECONOMIC CHANGES 1945 – 2010

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The relatively short period which this research covers was a time of rapid social change; the Scotland of 2000 was very different to that of 1945. Recovery from the negative economic and social effects of World War Two was slow, but by 2000 major social, political and economic changes had taken place. Thus the few castle restorations which were carried out in the 1950s were done in a different social world from those of the 1990s. Standards of living had increased greatly, as had social mobility and educational opportunities. In 1934 S.M.T. Magazine was full of praise for the new means of motorized transport as a way of reaching Scotland’s historic buildings:

The facilities which these modern vehicles offer still seem incredible, so perfect are they in design and workmanship and comfort. With the motor coach and car at our disposal, we may now travel in freedom and comfort into the heart of the distant hills, or by the shores of the Western seas, all in a

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<sup>151</sup> Robert Hewison **The Heritage Industry**, 9 - 10

brief day's journey, and still find ample time to visit many of our ancient abbeys and historic castles.<sup>152</sup>

Doubtless, travel by motor car and charabanc was a thrilling novelty in the 1930s, but it was not until the 1960s that improvements in infrastructure brought about greater ease of transport, through better roads, new bridges, more reliable cars and increased air travel, which in turn allowed those with new wealth to buy properties in remote areas and still move around the country efficiently for business purposes. In economic terms, Scotland's star had been waning since the start of the twentieth century and it was a poor country in the wake of WW2; the legacy of war was evident in the daily lives of ordinary people.

The benefits of the welfare state and the promise of a new and fairer Britain were slow in coming to Scotland. In 1951, a quarter of the population was still living in one- or two- roomed housing, 40 per cent had no access to a fixed bath and a third of all families had to share a toilet.....By the end of the 1950s, Scottish economic growth was half the rate of the British average, and income per head was 13 per cent lower.<sup>153</sup>

It was not only among the poor that life in Scotland was hard. Christian Miller's evocative biographical narrative of a child's harsh life in Monymusk Castle in the 1920s<sup>154</sup> could probably have been echoed in the lives of many of those living in castles and large houses in the 1950s. Catherine Maxwell-Stewart reported that her grandmother had lived alone at Traquair throughout WW2 with no electricity and limited heating<sup>155</sup> and even in the twenty-first century some owners live in damp castles with little heating. Murray Pittock has argued that the gradual collapse of Empire from 1947 - 1967 was particularly hard on the educated middle classes of Scotland. "The twenty years from 1947 saw the steady dissolution of the British Empire: it was ..... no coincidence that the Scottish National Party's by-election victory at Hamilton and the first surge of Scottish nationalism which accompanied it, happened at the end of this process. Scottish engineers, doctors, merchants and financiers no longer had access to overtly imperial opportunities and markets."<sup>156</sup>

Before WW2, in the 1930s, three organisations were founded which reflected a sense of Scottish identity: the National Party of Scotland in 1928 (as from 1934 the Scottish National Party, or SNP), the National Trust for Scotland in 1931 and the Saltire Society in 1936. In the 1950s there was a growing sense of national consciousness. The Scottish Convention, a cross-party political organization, launched the Scottish Covenant, a petition in favour of home rule, at the end of October 1949. By the end of 1950 over two million people had signed. Further, on Christmas

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<sup>152</sup> **Scotland's Ancient Heritage** (1934), Foreword

<sup>153</sup> Richard Finlay 'A Century of Pain and Pleasure' in Gordon Menzies (ed) **In Search of Scotland** (2001) Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 219 – 220

<sup>154</sup> Christian Miller **A Childhood in Scotland** (1989) Canongate Classics, Edinburgh

<sup>155</sup> Catherine Maxwell-Stuart 'Making it Pay – the Challenge of Conserving and Profiting from the Family Home', paper presented at the HHA/HS conference in the Scottish Parliament 25<sup>th</sup> November 2005

<sup>156</sup> Murray Pittock **The Road to Independence? Scotland Since the Sixties** (2008) Reaktion Books, London, 9

morning 1950, four Scottish students broke into Westminster Abbey and stole the Stone of Destiny. The symbolism of the story generated much excitement in Scotland. Ian Hamilton, one of the students, wrote later:

We woke Scotland. The newspapers of that period wrote of little else, Scottish and English alike. Rewards were offered by the press and withdrawn when the public refused to buy newspapers which tried to sell themselves by selling us. One policeman summed up the Scottish attitude when he went on record as saying, 'Aye, we're looking for them, but no' so damned hard that we'll catch them."<sup>157</sup>

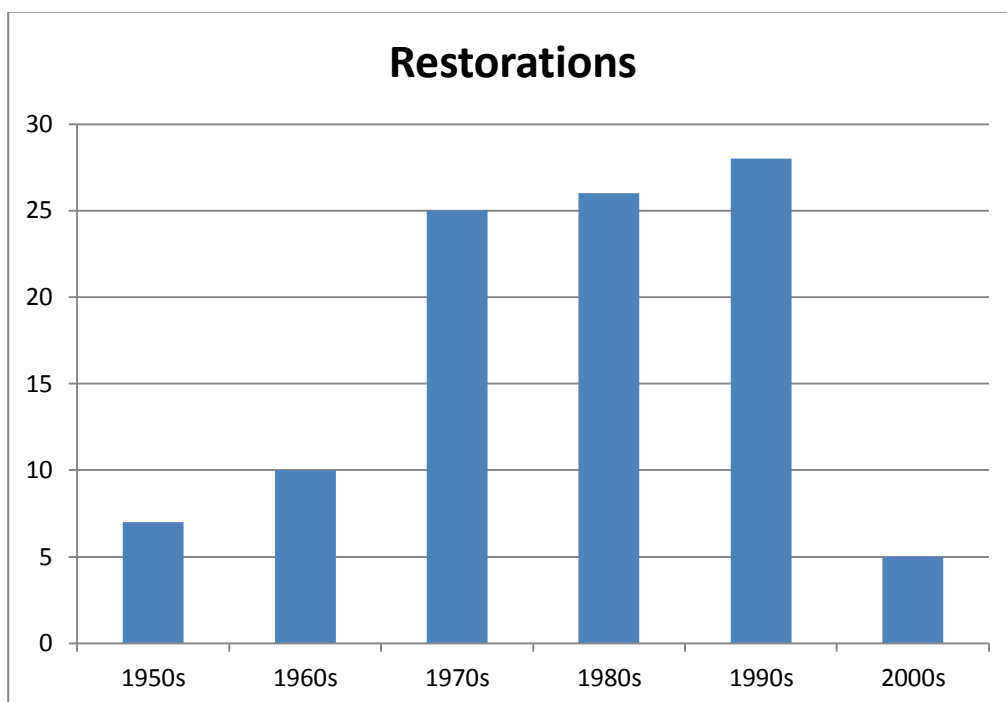
However, with neither the Labour nor Conservative party behind home rule, the petition and the spectacular theft were limited to mere gesture politics and the movement fizzled out. The sense of Scottish national consciousness, arguably, remained.

David McCrone, in following an imaginary time-traveller through the twentieth century, focused on three themes which characterized the dates of 1900, 1950 and 2000 – respectively, 'capital', 'state' and 'nation'. "By 'nation' we mean that social life in Scotland is framed by cultural factors rather than simply economic (capital) and political (state) ones.....What we encounter at the start of the new century is a reconfiguring of Scotland around its sense of being a nation, a way of explaining why it is the way it is, as well as a route map for its future."<sup>158</sup> The cultural factors which McCrone examines include national identity, but not – not explicitly, at any rate – 'heritage' or conservation of the built environment. Yet the second half of the twentieth century also saw the conservation movement across Britain and Europe start up, gradually swell and finally grow to huge proportions, at the same time as the number of restorations of Scottish castles rose dramatically, decade on decade; the numbers of demolitions dropped equally dramatically, as can be seen in figures 25 and 26, below. Sales of castles also increased over time - in the 1950s only a handful of castles were sold, rising to over one hundred in the 1990s. Was this simply a reflection of the number of general property sales in the period? Or are these changes cultural as well as economic?

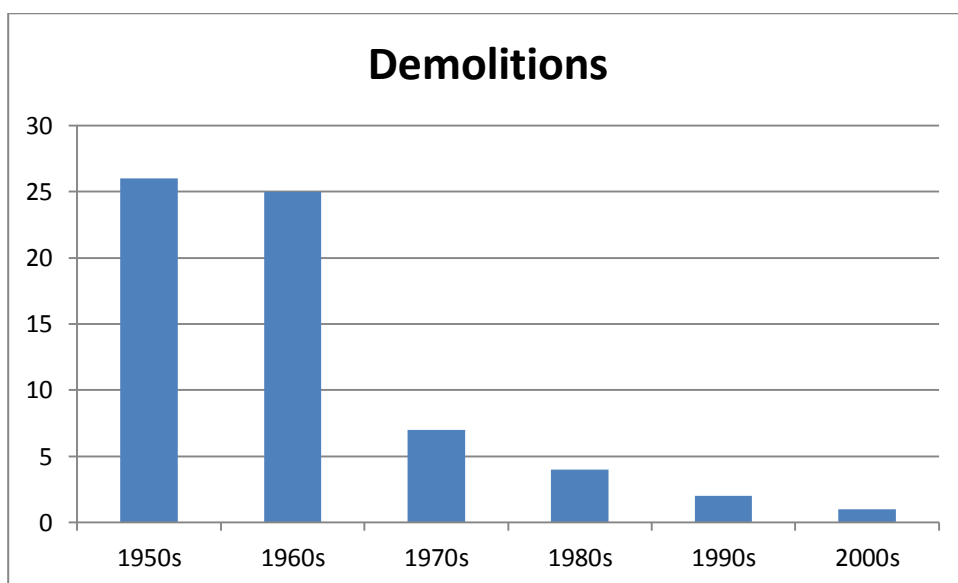
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<sup>157</sup> Ian Hamilton **A Touch of Treason** (1990) Lochar Publishing, Moffat, 62

<sup>158</sup> David McCrone **Understanding Scotland. The sociology of a nation**, 7



**Table 3 Restorations of Scottish castles 1950 – 2010**



**Table 4 Demolitions of Scottish castles 1950 - 2010**

Culturally, much of the story of the heritage movement is shared between Scotland and England. Scotland certainly had its own heritage champions, such as Nigel Tranter and Maurice Lindsay, and its own national and local conservation organizations, but as a nation it benefited from the broader British campaigning of individuals, including Marcus Binney, Roy Strong and Patrick

Cormack, and organisations such as SAVE Britain's Heritage, whose focus was mainly on England, but whose message was disseminated throughout the UK by the media and by those interested in historic buildings who moved between the two countries. The Scottish charitable conservation bodies - The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, The Scottish Castles Association, The Scottish Civic Trust, The Scottish Historic Buildings Trust, The Saltire Society and The National Trust for Scotland - all played a role in changing public attitudes and conservation practice, as did a handful of active and influential individuals who campaigned for changes in attitudes towards historic buildings. In Scotland, unlike England, the sense of 'national identity' is bound up with the iconography of castellated architecture, beyond the mere romantic attraction of castles. Charles McKean was surprised to find that reaction to *The Scottish Chateau*, published in 2001, differed north and south of the border. Scottish readers focused on the issue of castles:

It had become clear that these 'castles' were castles only in name, and that, in many cases, such a name was a modern attribution. They were, rather, largely indefensible stately houses or country seats. Yet what extraordinary passion this interpretation provoked.....it was taken as an attack upon the builders of these houses, on their owners, and as an affront to the honour of the country itself. To remove the warlike overcoat of these great houses was tantamount to robbing them of their dignity and personality.<sup>159</sup>

David McCrone examined the history of Scottish identity over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and gives a nice explanation of the way in which Scottish people grasp the difference between Scottishness and Britishness (or nationality and citizenship), whereas English people are puzzled when asked to define themselves as either English or British – they do not grasp the distinction. He refers to the 'Scottish Myth' of social egalitarianism and the 'lad o' pairts' who gets on in society through talent and hard work, and suggests that it has a parallel in the sustaining power of the American Dream. "In the American context the Dream is a story, a narrative, which helps to define Americans to themselves and others. It is, in other words, an identity myth saying who 'we' are and what are the intrinsic values of a people."<sup>160</sup> Do those who buy a castle buy into the lad o' pairts myth? Many buyers have originally come from quite humble backgrounds, and of these, some value the opportunity to become the 'laird' of the castle, defining their identity through their ownership. In Scotland, as in much of the rest of Europe, the gradual collapse of heavy manufacturing, to be replaced by service industries, had shifted social class boundaries upwards. McCrone claimed that the SNP was especially attractive for those who were upwardly mobile socially:

"The October 1974 election study showed the undoubted 'classless' appeal of the SNP, a feature of both strength and weakness. Although the party did well among all social classes in Scotland, its particular attraction was for those who were socially and geographically mobile in the 1970s. The lack of a class connotation for the SNP was perhaps a key factor for the upwardly socially mobile.

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<sup>159</sup> Charles McKean *The Scottish Chateau* (2004) preface to second edition

<sup>160</sup> McCrone, *Sociology*, 90

Such people were susceptible to a kind of political perspective which was different from the one with which they had grown up.”<sup>161</sup>

In 1996 the Labour Deputy Leader John Prescott is famously claimed to have said, “We’re all middle class now”<sup>162</sup>; it was those who could broadly be termed ‘middle class’ in the new catch-all category, which ranged from low grade white collar workers to high ranking military officers, who comprised the majority of those who bought Scottish castles to restore, most often purchasing them from members of the old landowning classes – but without threatening their continuing status:

Scotland’s landed class has survived to an astonishing extent. Despite the cost of maintaining huge estates and crumbling castles, despite inheritance taxes and hostile governments, despite pressure for land reform and access to the public, the great names which are studded through Scottish history remain.....Diminished and thinned in rank they may be, but they are still largely in place and showing every sign of hanging on. They have done so by adapting to circumstances, marrying into ‘new’ money, setting up trusts, carving out a niche in the City, letting out the sporting rights on their heather-clad hills, opening up the family home to the public, or selling off parcels of land here and there to keep going. Their tenacity is remarkable.<sup>163</sup>

Even the very wealthy nineteenth century parvenus posed no particular threat. J. Mordaunt Crook’s study of the Victorian aspirational *nouveaux riches* described the architectural excesses of their newly built houses, which in Scotland tended to favour Scots Baronial in style. “But it would be wrong to think that these Glaswegian *nouveaux riches* set out to compete with the old aristocracy as landowners. It was the image they coveted, not the substance of territorial possession.”<sup>164</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that most of the ‘new’ owners of Scottish castles were also, at least in part, in love with the *image* of the building they planned to inhabit.

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### THE CULTURAL CONTEXT: THE GROWTH OF THE ‘HERITAGE INDUSTRY’

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“That which is valued by a dominant culture or cultures in society is preserved and cared for; the rest can be mindlessly or purposefully destroyed, or just left to rot.”<sup>165</sup>

Historic buildings are symbolic representations of the past; the attitudes towards them which are displayed by governments, society and individuals reflect, to a large extent, their view of history itself. The first public buildings to be restored after the Great Fire of London in 1666 were not the

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<sup>161</sup> David McCrone ‘We’re a Jock Tamson’s Bairns’ in T.M.Devine and R.J.Finlay (eds) **Scotland in the Twentieth Century** (1996) Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh

<sup>162</sup> Penny Wark ‘Are we all middle class now?’ 19 March 2008 **The Times**

<sup>163</sup> George Rosie ‘The Establishment and the Aristocracy’ in Magnus Linklater and Robin Denniston (eds) **Anatomy of Scotland** (1992) Chambers, Edinburgh, 27

<sup>164</sup> J.Mordaunt Crook **The Rise of the Nouveaux Riches** (1999) John Murray, London, 236

<sup>165</sup> R. Bevan **The Destruction of Memory. Architecture at War** (2006) Reaktion Books, London, 11-12

churches but the prisons<sup>166</sup>. Buildings have a powerful presence in our everyday lives and threats to their continuity are often met with fierce resistance and sadness. But their significance changes over time. As Raphael Samuel pointed out in 1994, “Old-fashioned was a term of opprobrium in the 1950s and is now a gauge of authenticity”<sup>167</sup>. The fact that many of the historic buildings of Scotland were decaying and even being demolished dismayed a few outspoken conservationists before the 1970s, but nothing much was done to save them until the tide of public opinion turned.

### Before 1945

The plea for more care and attention for historic buildings by McGibbon and Ross in 1887 had been preceded by the setting up of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) by William Morris in 1877. SPAB’s manifesto was a purist plea “to resist all tampering with either the fabric or ornament of the building as it stands; if it has become inconvenient for its present use, to raise another building rather than alter or enlarge the old one; in fine to treat our ancient buildings as monuments of a bygone art, created by bygone manners, that modern art cannot meddle with without destroying.”<sup>168</sup> The context of this ideological entrenchment was Morris’s anger at English and Welsh ‘restorations’ which replaced mediaeval features with Victorian gothic revival rebuilding, such as St Albans Cathedral and in Paris, Viollet-le-Duc’s alterations of Notre Dame and La Sainte Chapelle. SPAB’s preservationist campaigning carried on throughout the twentieth century, although it was always a small player in the field of heritage organizations<sup>169</sup>, and only acquired a separate Scottish branch in 1995. Its long term influence on conservationists in the architectural profession and in Historic Scotland, however – although difficult to measure – has doubtless been significant and has led to disputes between purists and pragmatists, which have resulted in unpopular decisions by Historic Scotland about potentially restorable castles, such as Castle Tioram.

McGibbon and Ross had suggested that the reason for the neglect of Scotland’s castellated buildings “probably arises, to some extent, from their bearing on the architectural and natural history of Scotland not being sufficiently understood and appreciated.”<sup>170</sup> In 1939 Scott-Moncrieff proposed a more robustly expressed explanation: “all over the Lowlands the survivors of such houses [i.e. towers and mansions] are still left to fall into ruin: an *awful reflection of our aesthetic*

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<sup>166</sup> J.White ‘Pain and Degradation in Georgian London: Life in the Marchalsea Prison’ **Annual Raphael Samuel Memorial Lecture**, London, 7 Nov. 2008

<sup>167</sup> Ralph Samuel ‘Resurrectionism’ in D. Boswell and J. Evans (eds) **Representing the Nation: A Reader. Histories, Heritage and Museums** (1999) Routledge, Abingdon, 173

<sup>168</sup> William Morris **Manifesto of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)** full text online at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1877/spabman.htm> accessed September 2010

<sup>169</sup> Membership in 2009 was about 8,700, as opposed to over three million members of the (English)National Trust (information from the societies’ websites)

<sup>170</sup> D. MacGibbon and T. Ross *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 1, vii preface

*sluggardliness*.”<sup>171</sup> (brackets and italics added) Lack of understanding and ‘aesthetic sluggardliness’ as explanations boil down to much the same thing: ignorance, which may be claimed as a justifiable excuse and a cause for future optimism, if only education – or a social revolution, such as William Morris hoped for – would prevail. But Merlin Waterson claimed that the difficulty in changing attitudes, in the pre-war period at least, was that the opponents of aesthetic values were “not philistines out of ignorance, but by education and choice. They had been taught in the great public schools that team spirit and athleticism were the proper training for life.”<sup>172</sup> This view is backed up Cannadine’s analysis of the self-proclaimed role of the landed aristocracy as public-spirited guardians of Britain’s heritage as historically inaccurate: “Even in their heyday, most grandees and gentry were essentially philistines.”<sup>173</sup> Doubtless many were, but the offices of the National Trust and other heritage conservation organizations were usually filled by ‘grandees and gentry’, presumably those with an interest in conservation. Sir John Stirling Maxwell was the second president of The National Trust for Scotland (NTS), which was founded in 1931; he donated the first castle (and first building), Crookston Castle. It is now maintained by Historic Scotland.

#### 1945 – 2010

The Second World War had wreaked a terrible toll on historic buildings throughout Europe, although the UK emerged relatively unscathed, at least from enemy fire<sup>174</sup>. However, many country houses and castles were lost through attrition. John Harris, in 1946 a young aspiring architectural historian, visited over two hundred derelict grand country houses in England between then and 1961 and wrote a tragi-comic narrative of despair: “In my nomadic travels I discovered a situation that had no parallel elsewhere in Europe: a country of deserted country houses, many *in extremis*, most in a surreal limbo awaiting their fate. They suffered from vandalism, smelt of decay and dry rot, exuded a sense of hopelessness.”<sup>175</sup> Had Harris journeyed through Scotland, he would have been faced with the sad same scenes. He contributed to the SAVE Britain’s Heritage book *Lost Houses of Scotland*<sup>176</sup>, which estimated that 450 ‘houses of architectural pretension’ had been lost between 1900 and 1980. ‘Ordinary’ houses had also

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<sup>171</sup> George Scott-Moncrieff **The Lowlands of Scotland** (London: B.T.Batsford Limited, 1939), 66

<sup>172</sup> Merlin Waterson **The National Trust: The First Hundred Years** (1994) The National Trust, London, 101

<sup>173</sup> David Cannadine **The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy** (2006) Penguin Books, New York, 694

<sup>174</sup> For a thorough account of the levels of damage across Europe see N. Lambourne **War Damage in Western Europe: The Destruction of Historic Monuments During the Second World War** (2001) Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh

<sup>175</sup> John Harris **No Voice from the Hall: Early Memories of a Country House Snooper** (1998) John Murray, London

<sup>176</sup> Marcus Binney, John Harris and Emma Winnington **Lost Houses of Scotland** (1980) SAVE Britain’s Heritage, London



suffered much damage during the War. Alderson estimated that half a million had been destroyed and three and a half million damaged.<sup>177</sup> Research for this thesis has identified sixty-five demolished between 1945 and 2010 (see Appendix 2 for full list).



FIGURE 25 CRAIGENDS HOUSE 1857



FIGURE 26 IN RUINS 1974



FIGURE 27 FINAL DEMOLITION 1980<sup>178</sup>

<sup>177</sup> S. Alderson **Britain in the Sixties: Housing** (1962) Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 14

<sup>178</sup> Figures 27, 28 and 29 <http://www.craigends.org.uk/> accessed October 2009

Like Evelyn Waugh's fictional stately home, Brideshead, most houses of any size in the UK (unlike in Europe) had been requisitioned during the War<sup>179</sup> and used to accommodate field hospitals, prisoner of war camps, billeted troops or storage facilities for precious documents. (See Appendix 3 for a list of Scottish castles requisitioned and for what purposes). Mary, Duchess of Buccleuch recalled:

The army moved into Bowhill with not a thing put away. The officers' sitting room was where all the Van Dykes were. It was terribly badly used; the army did terrible things to the house, all the proverbial things that troops are supposed to do – hacking down the banisters to make firewood, and throwing darts at the pictures. They couldn't have done more harm, and ended up by nearly burning it down twice.<sup>180 181</sup>

In 1959 Waugh wrote a revised preface to *Brideshead Revisited*:

It was impossible to foresee, in the spring of 1944, the present cult of the English country house. It seemed then that the ancestral seats which were our chief national artistic achievement were doomed to decay and spoliation like the monasteries in the sixteenth century. So I piled it on rather, with passionate sincerity. Brideshead today would be open to trippers, its treasures rearranged by expert hands and the fabric better maintained than it was by Lord Marchmain.<sup>182</sup>

Waugh's optimism about the future of country houses in general was misplaced at the time. According to Binney and Watson-Smyth, between 1945 and 1975, 625 country houses had been demolished, with a peak in 1955 when one house was lost every five days.<sup>183</sup> Robinson put the number even higher, at one thousand in the decade after the War.<sup>184</sup> However, Waugh would probably have been right about Brideshead, as the era of the country house as a mass tourist attraction was just starting. In 1947 Henry Thynne, the 6<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Bath, inherited Longleat, a palatial country house in the south of England, "And in 1947 a large domestic household was a thing of the past. The roof was in need of repair, two chimneys were in danger of collapsing and the activities of the death-watch beetle had weakened many of the timbers that held the house together."<sup>185</sup> Henry Thynne faced a bill of £700,000 for death duties, and decided to open to the public to help assuage running costs. Within fifteen years of Longleat opening, six hundred other houses had followed suit<sup>186</sup>. Opening to the public was a centuries-old tradition for many

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<sup>179</sup> Harris estimates the number to be around two thousand. It is not clear whether he is referring to England alone, or the whole of the UK. Harris, **No Voice from the Hall**, 4

<sup>180</sup> Merlin Waterson (ed) **The Country House Remembered** (1985), 242

<sup>181</sup> Bowhill is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century mansion in the Scottish Borders: <http://www.bowhill.org/>

<sup>182</sup> Evelyn Waugh **Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder** (2000 edition: originally published 1945) Penguin Books, Harmondsworth

<sup>183</sup> M. Binney and M. Watson-Smyth **The Save Britain's Heritage Action Guide** (1991) London: Collins and Brown, 1991), 10

<sup>184</sup> J.M. Robinson **The Country House at War** (1989) Bodley Head, London. Robinson's interesting and thorough review of the role of the country house in World War Two unfortunately contains no references, so it is impossible to check his sources.

<sup>185</sup> D. Burnett **Longleat: The Story of an English Country House** (1978) Collins, London, 178 - 179

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, 181

houses<sup>187</sup>, but doing so commercially was something new. John, Duke of Bedford wrote candidly in his autobiography about the opening of Woburn:

I will not try and pretend that I embarked on the idea primarily out of a sense of social obligation. Certainly I wanted other people to share in the pleasure that all these lovely things we possess can afford, but the initial drive was purely economic. I knew that there was a great shortage of money, and as I love Woburn more than anything else in the world, I wanted to find some way of perpetuating it intact. Opening it to the public seemed the only way of doing it.”<sup>188</sup>

Later, in 1971, he wrote the tongue-in-cheek *How to Run a Stately Home*<sup>189</sup>, in response to Lord Montagu of Beaulieu's *Gilt and the Gingerbread*, with the subtitle, 'How to live in a stately home and make money'. Montagu coined the phrase 'stately gimmicks' to describe the types of attractions – safari parks, pop concerts, vintage car displays - which the owners put in place to attract tourists and bring in revenue. This pragmatic view of the need to find new ways to turn historic buildings into financial assets represented, for David Cannadine, evidence of the depths to which the aristocracy has been forced to stoop: "What would Mr. Gladstone or Lord Salisbury think of an aristocracy so decayed and so demeaned that it was reduced to turning its grounds into safari parks and funfairs, and to taking money from the masses as they trip and trundle through the turnstiles?"<sup>190</sup> Cannadine attributed the opening of large numbers of houses and estates throughout Britain as one reaction by the aristocratic classes to their catastrophic social and economic decline during the twentieth century. In Scotland, however, McCrone challenged this interpretation. Both authors claimed to apply a Weberian analysis, but McCrone focused on the aristocracy and landowners as a status group (rather than a class) and charted their struggle to 'hold the line of social privilege', as well as their economic assets, by publicly re-affirming their position as guardians of the country's heritage.

The stately home heritage industry, at least in the context of the Scottish Borders, is not simply an economic device to make great houses pay their way. Likewise, the move into heritage by the likes of Buccleuch and Roxburghe is not just an attempt to fill up their time following the end of Empire. One key to understanding why they became eminent Scottish heritage entrepreneurs lies in their exit from local politics in 1975. Stripped of their political function, the stately home industry represented a way of securing their economic future as well as a means of legitimizing their privileged position.<sup>191</sup>

In the aftermath of the theft of his Leonardo da Vinci painting from Drumlanrig Castle by thieves posing as paying guests, the Duke of Buccleuch claimed, in 2003, that the government should pay for security at large private properties open to the public. "The cost of providing access to these attractions is very high, with them facing security and employment costs. Seldom does the

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<sup>187</sup> Lord Montagu of Beaulieu **The Gilt and the Gingerbread or how to live in a stately home and make money** (1967) Sphere Books Limited, London. The first chapter gives a historical overview of historic houses open to the public since the eighteenth century.

<sup>188</sup> John, Duke of Bedford, **A Silver-plated Spoon** (Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson and Viney, 1959), 202-3

<sup>189</sup> John, Duke of Bedford **How to Run a Stately Home** (London: Andre Deutsch, 1971)

<sup>190</sup> David Cannadine **The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy**, 707

<sup>191</sup> David McCrone, A. Morris and R. Kiely **Scotland – The Brand**, 127

revenue generated by visitors cover these costs, particularly in rural areas.” He added that most owners of stately homes “consider themselves as stewards of our country’s heritage, carefully conserving it for future generations”<sup>192</sup>. This quotation provides a nice illustration and justification of McCrone’s claims.

Of the forty castles in private ownership that are open regularly to the public in Scotland, only two are owned by ‘new’ owners – Balgonie, owned by Raymond Morris (only partially restored) – and Castle Stalker, restored by the late Stewart Allward, a Surrey solicitor<sup>193</sup>. The rest are all in the hands of ‘old’ owners who have inherited the building, including the Dukes of Buccleuch and Roxburghe. During this same postwar period, the National Trust was increasing its stock of historic properties in England and Wales, and also its membership. Between 1940 and 1959 sixty-five properties were acquired.

The size and character of the Trust were transformed by these acquisitions: it had gained its current reputé as the custodian of country houses. The basis had now been laid for mass membership: visiting a country house became a normal way of spending a Saturday or Sunday, as incomes and car ownership increased.<sup>194</sup>

During the 1960s and 1970s, people in England and Scotland became more attuned to visiting historic buildings and by the 1980s there was “an exponential growth in the consumption of state-funded heritage”<sup>195</sup>, with ten million people visiting a castle or ancient monument and nine million visiting a stately home in 1988/9 alone. In 1992, 31.5 million visits to heritage attractions were recorded in Scotland. “Despite the fact that there had been a decrease of fourteen per cent in the number of visits since 1991, this is a staggering figure for such a small country.”<sup>196</sup> Among Scotland’s 2007 top twenty visitor attractions, paid and unpaid, four were castles<sup>197</sup>. Edinburgh received more than a million visitors, with Stirling Castle, Urquhart Castle and Culzean Castle reaching six figures. All four had seen increased visitor numbers since 2006, unlike several other top twenty attractions. The rest of Scotland’s castles which are opened on a commercial basis have tens of thousands, rather than hundreds of thousands of visitors per year.

Much earlier, in 1936, the National Trust in England had established the Country Houses Committee, whose secretary from its inception until 1951 was James Lees-Milne. Lees-Milne’s lively diaries<sup>198</sup> catalogue his negotiations with the owners of properties whose upkeep had become too onerous and who might be persuaded to donate them, suitably financially endowed,

<sup>192</sup> Neil Mackay ‘Da Vinci Duke worth £460m wants public cash’ **The Sunday Herald** August 3, 2003

<sup>193</sup> Michael Davis **Scots Baronial**, 57

<sup>194</sup> D. Sawers ‘The National Trust: The Private Provision of Heritage Services’, in A. Peacock (ed) **Does the Past Have a Future? The Political Economy of Heritage** (London: The Institute of Economic Affairs, (1998), 101

<sup>195</sup> McCrone **Scotland the Brand**, 135

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*, 137

<sup>197</sup> Marina Martinolli, Claire Bereziat and Margaret Graham **The 2007 Visitor Attraction Monitor** (2008), Visit Scotland, Glasgow Caledonian University

<sup>198</sup> James Lees-Milne **Diaries, 1942 -1954: Abridged and Introduced by Michael Bloch** (London: John Murray, 2006)

to the Trust. Cannadine describes the National Trust as undertakers, “embalming these once great power houses for posterity.”<sup>199</sup> His point is that the country house was not simply a building to live in, but a centre of power for its owners, visibly displaying wealth and status and acting as a focus for a local community. The often-quoted argument by owners and campaigning organizations such as the Historic Houses Association<sup>200</sup> is that houses are in better hands as family homes cared for by loving private owners rather than as ‘museums’ in the hands of the state. McCrone highlighted the iconography of “personalizing the heritage, leaving family pictures and bric-a-brac in strategic places to convey a sense of intimacy and awe”.<sup>201</sup> In the case of the castles of Scotland, however, many of the small to medium houses which were restored from ruins had not been centres of power, but rather peripheral parts of great estates (e.g. Aikwood or Kirkhope in the Borders), or had been abandoned by the families for more modern, grander and more convenient houses in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (e.g. Barholm in Galloway or Tilquhillie in Aberdeenshire).

However, despite the success of the Stately Home heritage business and the increasing popularity of the National Trust, buildings were still at risk from those whom Tranter described as ‘the improver, the modernizer, the demolisher and the vandal’<sup>202</sup> Tranter campaigned to save many Scottish towers, or ‘fortalices’ and was instrumental in finding new restoring owners for several, including Ballencrieff and Harthill.

Although there were, and are, so many of these buildings, the wastage in them today is grievous and deplorable, indeed disgraceful. They are very much a wasting, though irreplaceable, asset. Although we are the envy of so many from lands less favoured in this respect, all too few of our own people either know, appreciate or care for them. Especially, unhappily, local authorities, into whose hands many of them fall.<sup>203</sup>

At the lower end of the historic buildings scale, in terms of housing for ‘ordinary’ people, two books published in the 1960s illustrate the polar ends of the scale of ideas which were then current. Moultrie Kelsall and Stuart Harris wrote *A Future for the Past*<sup>204</sup> “in wrath and hope – wrath at the monumental wastage of old buildings that goes on in Scotland today; hope that it may yet be possible to stop it by marshalling the overwhelming arguments for reconstruction.” They argued that Scotland was in a particularly unfortunate position with regards to the loss through demolition of its stock of mainly eighteenth century small houses and cottages because so few had survived. The ideology against which they were railing is exemplified by Stanley

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<sup>199</sup> D.Cannadine **The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy**, 655

<sup>200</sup> <http://www.hha.org.uk/>

<sup>201</sup> McCrone et al **Scotland – The Brand**, 131

<sup>202</sup> Nigel Tranter **The Fortified House in Scotland**, vol 2, 6

<sup>203</sup> Ibid, 6

<sup>204</sup> Moultrie Kelsall and Stuart Harris **A Future for the Past** (1961) Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, preface. This was as much a manual of how to save old buildings as campaigning literature – Harris was a conservation architect who provided practical notes on how to deal with damp, dry rot, settlement cracks, etc.

Alderson's report on housing in the 1960s.<sup>205</sup> His tone is also that of wrath and hope, but in this case wrath at homelessness, inequalities of access to housing, and poor quality housing. The problem, as he saw it however, was not the destruction of houses, but the fact that too many were old and needed to be replaced by new ones. "Just as new motor cars are always coming on and old ones off the road, so the natural thing is always to be putting up new houses and pulling down old ones."<sup>206</sup> He went on to specify that the maximum lifespan for a house (even a 'good house') should be eighty years: "It is a safe assumption that we have 3,000,000 (sic) houses that we ought to pull down right away. It is almost unthinkable that we should not have pulled them down before they are a hundred years old."<sup>207</sup> This attitude towards sub-standard housing spread to a distrust of all old buildings and was prevalent among local councils in the 1960s and early 1970s. The story of the fight by conservationists to save Rossend Castle in Burntisland, Fife<sup>208</sup> whose Labour Council decided "that its ancient castle should be destroyed as a symbol of former feudal oppression"<sup>209</sup> exemplifies the struggles which went on in many places to save condemned historic buildings. Nigel Tranter campaigned in his books against the neglect of Scottish fortified houses and was particularly alarmed by "a craze for demolition among certain of our local government authorities, which seem to prefer anything modern, however unattractive and poorly built, to anything ancient."<sup>210</sup> These authorities were usually Labour. It is not fanciful to compare the deliberate destruction of architecturally significant buildings which symbolized unwanted ideologies to book burnings – an attempt, usually futile, but powered by rage and fear, to purge despised objects. Similar emotional reactions of distress and a deep sense of sadness are aroused by the violent destruction of both books and buildings, as both represent aspects of culture and civilization whose loss is a break with the past and leaves the future bleak. Ralph Samuel, as a socialist historian, regretted the attitude of many Labour politicians and the appropriation of heritage by the Right; after all, William Morris, champion of ancient buildings, had been co-founder of the Socialist League and had forged a vision of Britain where historic buildings would be valued.

In the built environment, the turn against comprehensive clearance and high-rise flats, the rise of conservative sentiment, and the discovery of 'heritage' in what had previously been designated slums, removed at a stroke what had been, ever since the birth of the Labour Party and in the imagination of its Fabian and ILP predecessors, the very essence of the socialist vision: a transformation of the built environment, the physical burying of what was conceived as the

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<sup>205</sup> Stanley Alderson **Britain in the Sixties: Housing** (1962) Although the title implies that Alderson is surveying *British* housing, he only gives figures and examples for England and Wales. Scotland does not feature.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 35

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 43

<sup>208</sup> The story as told by the architect L.Rolland is reprinted in full here: <http://www.brand-dd.com/burntisland/rossend2.html> Rossend is one of the narrative case studies in chapter five.

<sup>209</sup> J.Gerrard 'The Scottish Civic Trust' in Lesley Borley (ed) **Dear Maurice. Culture and Identity in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Scotland**, 161

<sup>210</sup> Tranter vol 1 (1962), 7

nightmare legacy of Victorian industrialism and unplanned urban growth. In other countries such matters were secondary to the socialist cause; in Britain they were of its essence.<sup>211</sup>

### The turning-point

In 1974 Marcus Binney and John Harris organized '*The Destruction of the Country House*' exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London<sup>212</sup> for the new curator, Roy Strong. The exhibition's 'Hall of Destruction' was a fantasy of tumbling columns illustrating some of the 1,000 or so country houses demolished over the preceding century.

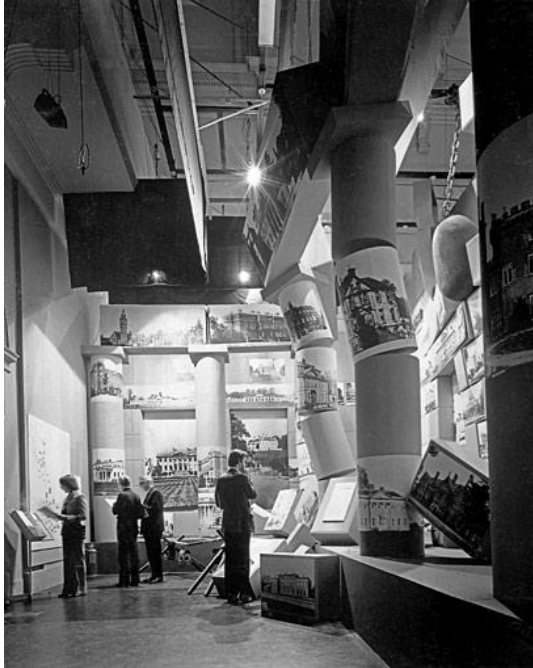


FIGURE 28 THE DESTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY HOUSE EXHIBITION<sup>213</sup>

The impact on the public was overwhelming, for they alighted upon it turning a corner, having been wafted along by an opening section on country house glories. And then they came face to face with this. Many was the time I stood in that exhibition watching the tears stream down the visitors' faces as they battled to come to terms with all that had gone. It was a brave exhibition to mount with a Socialist Government in power.<sup>214</sup>

The V&A website claims: "Such was the concern generated by the exhibition that from 1975 demolition of historic country houses came to a virtual halt."<sup>215</sup> This perhaps rather overstates the case, but the tide was indeed turning, not only in Britain, but throughout Europe. 1975 was European Architectural Heritage Year, during which the European Charter of the Architectural

<sup>211</sup> Samuel, 'Resurrectionism', 179

<sup>212</sup> The V&A website has a page on the exhibition at this link:

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/architecture/past/save/index.html> accessed October 2010

<sup>213</sup> <http://www.vam.ac.uk/images/image/26533-popup.html>

<sup>214</sup> Roy Strong *The Roy Strong Diaries 1967 – 1987* Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London (1997), 140

<sup>215</sup> V&A website link, first paragraph



Heritage was adopted by the Council of Europe<sup>216</sup>. The principles lay out the explicit and uncompromising message that the European heritage of historical buildings was in danger and efforts must be made to save it, with the justification being the social value of historical awareness: "This heritage should be passed on to future generations in its authentic state and in all its variety as an essential part of the memory of the human race. Otherwise, part of man's awareness of his own continuity will be destroyed."<sup>217</sup> Much later, in 1997, James Stevens Curl, who was Architectural Adviser for the Scottish Campaign of European Architecture Heritage Year, wrote: "I have an uncomfortable feeling that the Campaign, or something like it, needs to start all over again. There are still opinions flying about to the effect that historic buildings and the man-made heritage are somehow irrelevant..... (and) that 'there is too much conservation' getting in the way of 'progress'" <sup>218</sup>

In 1975 Marcus Binney founded SAVE Britain's Heritage, an organization which successfully campaigned<sup>219</sup> throughout the UK against the destruction of historic buildings – not just country houses, but churches, railway buildings, mills, and other buildings which even included public toilets.<sup>220</sup> Literature which listed buildings at risk was regularly published by SAVE and an effective public relations campaign was launched in the media which mobilized the support of local and national newspapers. John Cornforth had been commissioned by the Historic Houses Committee of the British Tourist Authority in 1972 to write an independent report on the future of country houses in Britain, in which he concluded gloomily (and mistakenly) that the outlook was worse than in 1945: "then at least there was the hope that things might get better, as indeed they did; but now there seems only the certainty that they will get worse."<sup>221</sup> Patrick Cormack, historian, Conservative Member of Parliament and founder secretary of the parliamentary All Party Committee for the Heritage, wrote *Heritage in Danger*<sup>222</sup> in 1978, in which he invoked lyrical images of the English country house, using emotive language which was typical of the impassioned heritage rhetoric of the time:

These houses are a special public possession for it is in them and in our churches that we perhaps come closest to the soul and spirit of England.....They are a unique and gentle blend of the

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<sup>216</sup> The Charter is available at [http://www.icomos.org/docs/euroch\\_e.html](http://www.icomos.org/docs/euroch_e.html) and The Declaration of Amsterdam, promulgated at the Congress on the European Architectural Heritage 21 - 25 October 1975 is at <http://www.icomos.org/docs/amsterdam.html>

<sup>217</sup> *European Charter of the Architectural Heritage*, adopted by the Council of Europe, October 1975, under principle 2

<sup>218</sup> James Stevens Curl 'European Architectural Heritage Year 1975' in Lester Borley (ed) **Dear Maurice**, 211

<sup>219</sup> SAVE still actively campaigns and publishes: <http://www.savebritainsheritage.org/>

<sup>220</sup> Marcus Binney **SAVE Britain's Heritage 1975 – 2005: Thirty Years of Campaigning** (London, Scala Publishers, 2005). This is a comprehensive history of SAVE's successful campaigns.

<sup>221</sup> John Cornforth **Country Houses in Britain – Can They Survive?** (1974) The Woodcote Press, Crawley, Sussex, 121. Cornforth, like Binney and Robinson catalogued losses of country houses since 1945. His figures, for 1945 – 1972, are 270 demolitions in England and Wales and 70 in Scotland. All are listed on pages 5 – 7 of his report

<sup>222</sup> Patrick Cormack **Heritage in Danger** (1978) Quartet Books, London



craftsman's art and rural beauty, filled with the familiar acquisitions of generations: the collections of the dilettanti; the library of the local scholar-statesman; the domestic accumulations which themselves give a living commentary on men and manners through the centuries. Set in their spacious parklands and often containing priceless collections, our country houses are part of the very fabric of our civilization.<sup>223</sup>

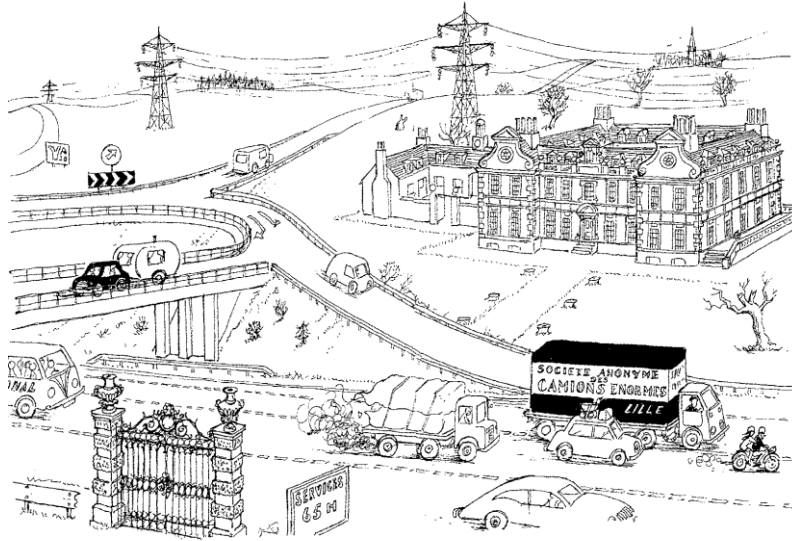


FIGURE 29 OSBERT LANCASTER'S CARTOON 'CHESNEY WOLD' DEPICTING THE PLIGHT OF THE COUNTRY HOUSE<sup>224</sup>

In Scotland, another significant event at this time was when the twelfth Duke of Argyll organized the swift rebuilding of Inverary Castle after the very serious fire on 5 November 1975, which "reflected a turning point in attitudes to preservation, and inspired the conservation of further houses."<sup>225</sup> Inverary Castle is a magnificent eighteenth century castellated mansion, of the type to which Cormack was doubtless referring when he wrote of the 'very fabric of our civilization'.

Cormack's sentimental, arcadian view of the English past was condemned by Martin Wiener in *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850 – 1980*, published in 1981<sup>226</sup>. Wiener's book was much admired by the New Right of the Thatcher government, one story – possibly apocryphal – being that Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education and Science, had handed a copy to all Cabinet members<sup>227</sup>. Although Margaret Thatcher was accused of having manipulated ideas about heritage and Victorian values for political gain, Samuel points out that she had 'no

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 49-50

<sup>224</sup> James Knox **Cartoons and Coronets. The Genius of Osbert Lancaster**, 114

<sup>225</sup> Ian Gow **Scotland's Lost Houses** (2006) Aurum Press, London, 13

<sup>226</sup> M. Wiener **English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850 – 1980** (1981) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

<sup>227</sup> See a reference to the Wikipedia claim by Martin Wiener at: <http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-Albion&month=0609&week=c&msg=OAiB6yfyGvijsom%2bTLVdVQ&user=&pw=> accessed November 2010

room for stately homes', very little sensitivity to history or traditions and that Victorian values were 'modernization in mufti'.<sup>228</sup> Wiener's analysis of English culture as handicapped by a cloying emphasis on a rural past was more to her taste for industrial capitalism. But right/left stances were never a reliable guide to views on heritage. From the mid-1980s, a reaction to the rise of heritage set in. Heritage was seen as having been appropriated by conservatism and the political forces of the Right, despite the New Right's rejection of sentimental views of the past, and came to represent, for some academics at least, pejorative and almost comic connotations.

In 1979 Patrick Wright returned to Britain from a five year stay in North America and reported, 'I felt as if I had inadvertently stumbled into some sort of anthropological museum'<sup>229</sup> He wrote his excoriating review of a country in decline because of its emphasis on heritage, *On Living in an Old Country*, published in 1985, which was followed in 1987 by the publication of Robert Hewison's *The Heritage Industry*<sup>230</sup>. Hewison argued that "The growth of a heritage culture has led not only to a distortion of the past, but to a stifling of the culture of the present."<sup>231</sup> Both books had a profound influence on academic political and social science, with their argument that heritage, as McCrone puts it "was used by the (Thatcher) regime to paper over some fundamental ideological and political cracks in the fabric of the state."<sup>232</sup> Lowenthal, in the preface to *The Past as a Foreign Country*, describes the past as a foreign country 'with a booming tourist trade'<sup>233</sup> and analyzed our eager but uneasy contemporary relationship with history. He drew a clear distinction between history and heritage, whose aims, he said, are contrary to each other:

The historian, however blinkered and presentist and self-deceived, seeks to convey a past consensually known, open to inspection and proof, continually revised and eroded as time and hindsight outdate its truths. The heritage fashioner, however historically scrupulous, seeks to design a past that will fix the identity and enhance the well-being of some chosen individual or folk. History cannot be totally dispassionate, or it will not be felt worth learning or conveying; heritage cannot totally disregard history, or it will seem too incredible to command fealty. But the aims that animate these two enterprises, and their modes of persuasion, are contrary to each other.<sup>234</sup>

When the National Trust acquired a dilapidated Gothic Revival property, Tyntesfield House in 2003, with the explicitly stated aim of broadening access to historic properties, it seemed quite shameless in its manipulation of the imagery of the past: "The first visitors were welcomed up the drive to gleeful cries of "Heritage is the new sex" from the Trust's PR people."<sup>235</sup> Heritage may be the 'new sex', perhaps, but not history. In 1984 Prince Charles stepped into the heritage and

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<sup>228</sup> Ralph Samuel 'Mrs Thatcher and Victorian Values' in **Island Stories: Unravelling Britain. Theatres of Memory vol 2** (1998) Verso, London, 345 - 346

<sup>229</sup> Patrick Wright *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (1985) Verso, London, 12

<sup>230</sup> Robert Hewison *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (1987)

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, 10

<sup>232</sup> David McCrone, A. Morris and R. Kiely *Scotland – The Brand*, 21

<sup>233</sup> David Lowenthal *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press), introduction, xvii

<sup>234</sup> David Lowenthal *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (1998) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, xi

<sup>235</sup> Patrick Forbes 'Has the Trust Broken Down?' *The Sunday Telegraph* November 16 2003

conservation debate. The occasion was the 150th anniversary of the Royal Institute of British Architects, the setting Hampton Court Palace. Charles had been invited to present the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture, but instead of uttering a few platitudes, as had been expected, he launched an outspoken attack on architecture in post War Britain:

At last, after witnessing the wholesale destruction of Georgian and Victorian housing in most of our cities, people have begun to realise that it is possible to restore old buildings and, what is more, that there are architects willing to undertake such projects. For far too long, it seems to me, some planners and architects have consistently ignored the feelings and wishes of the mass of ordinary people in this country.<sup>236</sup>

Although he was consequently ridiculed by the architectural community for his lack of knowledge and understanding, his criticism of modernist architecture and his points about conservation and lack of consultation struck a chord with the public and the media. Prince Charles was generally lauded by the popular press and went on to make a documentary film about architecture with the BBC, *A Vision of Britain*, in 1988. In 1989 an accompanying book was published<sup>237</sup>, in which he pointed the finger of blame for the destruction of the built heritage firmly at the architectural profession:

The further I delve into the shadowy world of architecture, planning and property development the more I become aware of various interest groups.....I believe it was the architectural establishment, or a powerful group within it, which made the running in the 50s and 60s. It was they who set the cultural agenda.<sup>238</sup>

The implied conspiracy theory and simplistic characterization and blaming of the architecture profession may be exaggerated, but the 'cultural agenda' was indeed set against conservation in the 1950s and 60s. From Judt's European viewpoint, though, the change of climate in the 1970s came about through a combination of economic and 'natural' causes:

The sheer scale of urban destruction, the pan-European urge to have done with the past and leap in one generation from ruins to ultra-modernity, was to prove its own nemesis (thankfully aided by the recession of the 1970s, which trimmed public and private budgets alike and brought the orgy of renewal to a halt).<sup>239</sup>

In 1992 Prince Charles was faced with a pressing personal heritage problem within the property of the Crown; the great fire at Windsor Castle destroyed twenty per cent of the buildings. The question of what and how (and even if) to restore was not only followed with great interest by the media, but attempts were made to influence the process through newspaper editorials which

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<sup>236</sup> The full text of the speech is available on the Prince of Wales's website:

[http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speechesandarticles/a\\_speech\\_by\\_hrh\\_the\\_prince\\_of\\_wales\\_at\\_the\\_150th\\_anniversary\\_1876801621.html](http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speechesandarticles/a_speech_by_hrh_the_prince_of_wales_at_the_150th_anniversary_1876801621.html) accessed September 2010

<sup>237</sup> Charles, Prince of Wales **A Vision of Britain. A Personal View of Architecture** (1989) Doubleday, London

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 9

<sup>239</sup> Tony Judt **Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945** (2006) Penguin Books, New York

put forward passionate arguments both for and against restoration.<sup>240</sup> The language of conservation and restoration and the arguments of the Ruinists (leave as is) Replicationists (copy as was) and Modernists (replace with something entirely new) thus became part of the national consciousness via the media. The equally catastrophic fire at Uppark, a National Trust property, three years earlier in 1989, had been followed by a high-profile restoration which was visually authentic in every minute detail, down to the artificial fading of wallcoverings and fabrics to ‘age’ them back to pre-restoration appearances<sup>241</sup>. This was hugely costly (but paid for by the insurance company); at Windsor the decision was taken on economic grounds to make all restoration ‘equivalent’ rather than ‘authentic’.

The Windsor Castle and Uppark fires highlighted a number of longstanding questions which are raised when buildings are planned for restoration. The practical and theoretical history of conservation has been thoroughly traced by Jukka Jokilehto<sup>242</sup> in a wide-ranging coverage of approaches, traditions and conservation principles across Europe, the USA, India and Japan across centuries. He tackled the problematic issues of how different cultures define protection, restoration and conservation at different times in their history. In the concluding chapter Jokilehto grappled with such tricky concepts as historicity, authenticity, integrity, continuity and, finally, relativity and universality. This scholarly work illustrates the historical context and explains the how and why of differing conservation approaches. In Scotland, as elsewhere, practices have changed over time:

In the seventies, restorers might well have been seen as one of many products of the new democratic age: romantic enthusiasts paradoxically saving and adapting against a background of large scale town centre redevelopment and wholesale demolition of country houses. Since then, the honing of conservation theory and practice, together with privatization fears and new assumptions about the commercial value of property, has made professionals and public more wary.<sup>243</sup>

In an unpublished paper<sup>244</sup> Michael Davis argued that architectural conservation as a movement is losing its way for a number of reasons, including a lack of understanding of what the public wants and expects, an over-reliance on blinkered professionalism and – although he does **not** spell this out in so many words – a lack of common sense. Quoting an instance of an attractive crowstep gable which had bizarrely been encased in a series of mechanical lead boxes, in a “reversible” scheme initiated by a conservation charity and overseen by the local planning authority and by Historic Scotland, he claims “This is the visible projection of the official conservation establishment slowly disappearing up its own back passage.” A colourful image, but one which had clearly resulted from exasperation with planning and conservation practices, in which the letter, rather than the spirit, of legislation is blindly followed.

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<sup>240</sup> A. Nicolson **Restoration: The Rebuilding of Windsor Castle** (1997) Penguin Books, London, chapter 3

<sup>241</sup> C. Rowell and J. M. Robinson **Uppark Restored** (1996) The National Trust, London

<sup>242</sup> Jukka Jokilehto **A History of Architectural Conservation** (1999) Elsevier, Oxford

<sup>243</sup> Davis in Clow, 193

<sup>244</sup> Michael C. Davis **The restoration issue and the end of architectural conservation** (2007) unpublished paper; personal communication

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## THE ROLE OF THE CAMPAIGNERS

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Campaigners do not fit neatly into either one of two boxes, corporate and individual. All corporate bodies consist of a group of individuals, some of whose voices are louder and more insistent than others. Equally, those campaigners who present a public face mainly as individuals, rather than secretaries of campaigning bodies, say, do not operate in isolation; in the background are friends, family, colleagues and associates who offer help and support. A few media conscious individuals played a major, publicly recognised role in bringing about changes in practice or legislation. The motivations and *modus operandi* of these men – they are all men – will be examined separately, before an analysis of the organizations that campaigned to save endangered buildings. Again, the question arises as to whether the history of conservation, then, is the history of ‘great men’? To the extent that certain outstanding individuals drove forward change through their personal actions, the answer is a qualified yes. However, they were all of their time and reactive to the social and economic world in which they lived; they did not operate in a vacuum. Yet something impelled these particular men to become proactive and channel their energies – their libido, in Jungian psychological terms – into crusading for change.

### **The early individual campaigners before 1945**

One of the earliest and most famous defenders of the Scottish built heritage was the novelist Sir Walter Scott, who built Abbotsford House in the Borders, an early example of Scots Baronial. But another active conservationist, George Scott-Moncrieff, was equivocal about Scott’s contribution, expressed in a rather unkind art metaphor:

Whether Scott’s ‘discovery’ of Scotland helped towards saving our good buildings is a moot point. If it saved some from being pulled down, the extraordinary lack of judgment of a man who could rear Abbotsford must have condemned many to ‘improvements’ in the Scottish baronial style to the point of obliteration: as if an El Greco were to have its corners clipped, fresh detail painted in, and the whole incorporated in a vast Victorian canvas.<sup>245</sup>

In addition, Sir John Stirling Maxwell, the second president of the NTS, the novelist John Buchan and the architects David McGibbon and Thomas Ross all campaigned to raise awareness of the potential loss of historic buildings. There were also the cataloguers, who described what was there but did not actively try to divert threats (for example, the librarian and archaeological historian, W. Douglas Simpson, and the artist antiquarian, Robert William Billings), and the ‘doers’, who worked to preserve and restore threatened buildings through their architectural practices, such as Robert Lorimer. Their descriptions and actions may also have had an indirect impact by alerting people to the value of historic buildings or inspiring campaigners in their efforts.

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<sup>245</sup> George Scott-Moncrieff **The Lowlands of Scotland** (1939), 32-33

### Individual campaigners after 1945

There were many people – among them, prominent architects, historians, landowners, politicians and authors – who were outraged at what they saw as the wanton destruction of historic buildings in the decades after the War and whose voices were raised against it. The individual campaigners who are singled out here are those who understood the increasing power of the popular media and moved to harness it effectively in the cause of their heritage campaigns. Only three were Scots: Moultrie Kelsall, Nigel Tranter and Maurice Lindsay. In England, Roy Strong comes across in his *Diaries* as a consummate politician who conceived of his role as Director of the V & A as one of an agent of persuasion and change. One entry reads: “One of the burning reasons for wanting to direct the V & A was the passionate belief that a huge threat was on the horizon for everything which we now categorize as ‘heritage’, and that that museum under my directorship could play a crucial role as a vehicle in its defense.”<sup>246</sup> In England, Marcus Binney, Patrick Cormack, John Harris and John Cornforth, among others, wrote persuasively and campaigned actively about heritage issues. In addition to the campaigners, the authors who raised public consciousness by writing about heritage and historic buildings and those working ‘behind the scenes’ on committees and within conservation organisations were also able to influence the media and public awareness. The architects who demonstrated the power of example in restoring buildings included Ian Lindsay, Ian Begg, Robert Hurd, James Simpson, Nicholas Groves-Raines, and Kit Martin. Kit Martin, who developed four large Scottish castellated country houses into carefully designed apartments<sup>247</sup>, was credited with radically changing public perceptions of the large country house in an adulatory newspaper article:

To understand the achievements of Kit Martin, you have to remember what life was like in 1976. The last property boom wasn't even a twinkle on the horizon. Restoration-mania had not begun. Country houses lay rotting in their parklands, barn conversions were a rarity, and the dockland warehouse flat had not even been thought of. Quite unassailed by doubt, Kit Martin chose this time to buy and move into Dingley Hall, Northamptonshire, a Grade I listed ruined mansion which he proceeded to restore and divide into 10 separate houses. In so doing, he altered the course of history for a whole gallery of other country seats abandoned to dereliction in the post-war years of servantless austerity; and he turned the tide of public opinion back in favour of their rescue.<sup>248</sup>

Marcus Binney invited Kit Martin to join forces with him and together they wrote *The Country House: To Be Or Not To Be* in 1982, a campaigning book published by SAVE Britain's Heritage.

In the 1960s Nigel Tranter wrote and illustrated his own five volume work on fortified houses and lesser castles of Scotland. He lamented the sad state of so many buildings at risk of collapse in the introduction to each and also pointed out which could be saved throughout the text. In an article in *The Scottish Field* in 1990<sup>249</sup>, Tranter identified twenty towers (and added “I could name scores

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<sup>246</sup> Roy Strong **The Roy Strong Diaries 1967 – 1987**, 121

<sup>247</sup> Cullen House (1983) and Keith Hall (1984-6), Aberdeenshire, Tynninghame House (1987), East Lothian and Formakin House (1988-9), Renfrewshire

<sup>248</sup> Caroline McGhie ‘The Saviour of the Country Seat’ December 20, 1992 **The Independent on Sunday**

<sup>249</sup> Nigel Tranter ‘Towers of Strength’ **Scottish Field** July 1990

of others”) which were available for restoration. Of the *Scottish Field* list, however, only two have since been restored (Fenton and Ballone).

### **The role of the campaigning conservation bodies:**

The six main national campaigning heritage bodies in Scotland all have some kind of mission statement which sets out their beliefs and policies. Although similar in tone, the specific words and phrases chosen reflect the niche which each has carved out.

The Historic Houses Association (HHA) believes that “the conservation and understanding of heritage, and *within that privately owned heritage*, is essential for a healthy and modern society and economy, and supports the public’s understanding of their individual and common identity, our place in history and our vision for the future”<sup>250</sup> (italics added) The HHA is essentially a UK wide campaigning club for the private owners of historic properties, which has a two tier membership structure that allows non-owners to join only as lesser members, or ‘friends’. Its documents and website use terms such as ‘stewardship’, succession, maintenance and fiscal policies. The National Trust for Scotland sees its role as “guardian of the nation’s magnificent heritage of architectural, scenic and historic treasures.”<sup>251</sup> (NTS) The notion of guardianship is central to the NTS. It is the biggest heritage organization in Scotland, with 310,000 members in 2010. Unfortunately the NTS was beset by financial difficulties and was severely criticized in a strategic review in August 2010 as not being ‘fit for purpose’ and unsustainable in its current management form<sup>252</sup> The Trust was warned that properties may have to be sold and staff cutbacks made to ensure its future. In England, however, membership numbers increased rapidly at the start of the twenty-first century, giving the National Trust leverage to claim rights to some political clout:

The government is failing to recognise the British hunger for heritage, gardening, and the natural world, a hunger that is fuelling the fastest growth rate the National Trust has known, Fiona Reynolds, the organization’s director general, said yesterday. New members joined the trust at a rate of one every 46 seconds last summer, faster than the British birth rate of one every 55 seconds. It now has 3.3 million members, making it the largest organisation in Europe.<sup>253</sup>

The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland (AHSS) is concerned with the protection, preservation, study and appreciation of Scotland’s buildings. It has 1100 members. It was started as a ginger group in response to the threat of demolition in George Square, Edinburgh in 1956 and was initially called the Georgian Group of Edinburgh. The story of the group’s early battles with planners was told by Eleanor Robertson, who had been a founder member and both secretary and president. “In 1957 the late Earl of Haddington agreed to become our first president. People

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<sup>250</sup> <http://www.hha.org.uk/our-policies.html> accessed November 2010

<sup>251</sup> <http://www.nts.org.uk/About/> accessed November 2010

<sup>252</sup> The review can be downloaded from the NTS website: <http://www.nts.org.uk/About/The-Review/> accessed November 2010

<sup>253</sup> Paul Brown ‘Trust seeks heritage high ground’ February 12, 2004 **The Guardian**

had to take us seriously after that.”<sup>254</sup> This is a nice illustration of McCrone’s view that the status and political clout of the aristocracy is enhanced by publicly re-affirming their position as guardians of the country’s heritage. In 1991 the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland held a conference entitled ‘Restoring Scotland’s Castles’, from which an eponymous book was published in 2000.<sup>255</sup> The conference comprised a retrospective review of eleven Scottish castles in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, with papers by various DIY restoring owners, architects and building professionals, several of which are quoted from in chapters four and five. The various contributions caused some ideological controversy:

Immediately, the difference between professional conservation philosophy and the philosophy of many restorers became evident. In the aftermath, the variety of standpoints of the critics themselves became clear .....while those influenced by SPAB dogma argued against the dishonesty of “a built-in patina of age” in reconstructed work, others trained in the context-based ethos of modern conservation were concerned at the lack of sympathy of obvious modern interventions.<sup>256</sup>

The Scottish Castles Association (SCA), which was founded in 1996, represents many of the restoring owners and new owners of smaller towers and castles; its demographic is different from the HHA. It is the most overtly welcoming in its statement to potential members and to restorers in particular: “Our Association is for all who have a love and enthusiasm for Scottish castles, towers and defensive structures, and who contribute to their preservation and restoration. The membership encourages castle owners, chatelaines, architects, historians, writers, artists, custodians, keepers and carers, and other enthusiasts.”<sup>257</sup> But with only 120 members, it is one of the smallest of the heritage organisations. The majority of members are castle owners, but others are not discriminated against, in the way that the HHA ‘friends’ are. SCA has as one of its stated objectives: “Encouraging the responsible ownership, conservation and restoration of ruined structures, and other buildings at risk, *in the belief that, in many cases, restoration offers the best means of ensuring their long-term survival.*”<sup>258</sup> (italics added) This is the only organisation with the overt aim of supporting castle restorations. In contrast, members of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in Scotland (SPABis) have to sign to say they agree with William Morris’s anti-restoration founding Manifesto, part of which reads:

It is for all these buildings, therefore, of all times and styles, that we plead, and call upon those who have to deal with them, to put Protection in the place of Restoration, to stave off decay by daily care, to prop a perilous wall or mend a leaky roof by such means as are obviously meant for support or covering, and show no pretence of other art, and otherwise to resist all tampering with either the fabric or ornament of the building as it stands....<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Eleanor Robertson ‘The Story of the Society’ **AHSS Magazine** number 6, Winter 1997. Available online: <http://www.ahss.org.uk/about/10/history> accessed November 2010

<sup>255</sup> Robert Clow (ed.) **Restoring Scotland’s Castles** (2000) John Smith & Son, Glasgow

<sup>256</sup> Michael Davis ‘Castle Tioram and the Restoration Debate’ in Clow, 64

<sup>257</sup> <http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/> accessed September 2009

<sup>258</sup> [http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/rec.php?id=15&cat\\_id=3&highlight=2](http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/rec.php?id=15&cat_id=3&highlight=2) accessed November 2010

<sup>259</sup> <http://www.spab.org.uk/what-is-spab-/the-manifesto/> accessed November 2010



The SPABis website, in 2011, had a *\*STOP PRESS\** notice dated 2002 about the Castle Tioram enquiry<sup>260</sup>, and an empty list of forthcoming events, so it appears not to be an active organisation in Scotland. Finally, the Scottish Civic Trust was founded in 1967, ten years after the formation of the Civic Trust in England by Duncan Sandys, to champion the cause of the built environment and historic buildings in particular. It does not have members in the way that the other organisations have, but rather liaises with and supports local civic groups.

It is difficult to assess the overall impact of these six organisations, either separately or together, on the ideology and practice of heritage conservation in Scotland during the second half of the twentieth century. Each would claim to be successful on its own terms, and each has contributed in some way to saving historic buildings at risk, but since their *raison d'être* is protection or guardianship, quantification is not possible. McCrone dubbed the combination of HS, the NTS and the Scottish Tourist Board (now called 'Visit Scotland') the 'holy trinity' of Scottish heritage and, in a fine profusion of metaphors, called them gatekeepers, entrepreneurs and manufacturers of heritage.<sup>261</sup> These terms could also apply to the six organisations described in this chapter.

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## THE POLITICAL CONTEXT: THE ROLE OF LEGISLATION

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The chronology of legislation, while containing no flavour of the personal passions and motivations of the individuals who campaigned for change and drove the heritage lobby, nevertheless gives a clear illustration of the relentless trend towards greater central control of conservation powers and increasing protection for the historic built environment, both in the UK and across Europe, which in turn both drove and reflected the increasing popular interest in heritage and changed architectural conservation practice. The European chronology of conventions and charters is in a later section in this chapter.

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### BEFORE 1945

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The first of a long series of Ancient Monuments Protection Acts was passed in 1882, after repeated attempts by Sir John Lubbock to get an architectural conservation measure passed by Parliament. It had an initial schedule of twenty-one monuments which the government could purchase or take into guardianship – but only if the owner agreed<sup>262</sup>. The second Act, in 1900, established the principle of public access to scheduled ancient monuments. In 1908 the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) was established by Royal Warrant to make a list or Inventory of the surviving heritage from the earliest times up to the year 1707. (The 25th and final county inventory, *Argyll. An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments, Volume 7, Mid Argyll and Cowal: Medieval and Later Monuments*, was not published

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<sup>260</sup> <http://www.spab.org.uk/spab-in-scotland/caistel-tioram/> accessed January 2011

<sup>261</sup> McCrone et al **Scotland the Brand**, chapter 4 passim

<sup>262</sup> A detailed history of conservation legislation is contained in chapter one of Patrick Cormack **Heritage in Danger**

until 1992.) In 1906, an Act whereby the Office of Works could acquire buildings was passed and in 1913 an Act allowing the scheduling of Ancient Monuments in private ownership with the possibility of preservation orders for uninhabited buildings. In 1931 another Ancient Monuments Act was passed and in 1932 eighteen monuments were taken into care by the Office of Works. Gradually, the principle of public protection of important buildings was being established and in 1944 the Town and Country Planning Act introduced the statutory listing of buildings of architectural and historic interest.

#### 1945 - 2010

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The beginning of this postwar period was marked by the publication of the Gowers Report in 1950, which identified 'serious problems connected with the care of ancient buildings' and led to the formation of the Historic Buildings Councils. In 1953, The Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act established the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland (HBC), part predecessor to Historic Scotland, and also introduced grants for owners of historic properties in need of conservation, but: "Even although that body provided the first ever financial inducement to retain historic buildings there was initially still little enthusiasm for the restoration of tower houses as residences."<sup>263</sup> The reasons for this reluctance to take up grants may have been to do with concern about the accompanying conditions, particularly to do with access for the public, and also the fact that at this time the owners of Scottish towers were mostly 'old' landowners or farmers who lived in houses on other parts of their estates and had no real incentive or need to restore a redundant unoccupied tower, unless it posed a threat of some kind. Restorations of ruinous sixteenth century or other historic buildings have rarely appeared to be commercially viable at the outset because of the high costs involved; owners have tackled them for all sorts of reasons, but the profit motive has seldom seemed foremost, although some owners undoubtedly did make profits when they sold on, as is discussed in chapter five. It was not until new would-be restorers came along and persuaded the old owners to sell their towers that the wave of restorations began to take off. And these new owners did not come along in any great numbers until the heritage tide had begun to turn in the mid-1970s. Increasingly, would-be restorers – many of whom were not financially secure – applied for grants from Historic Scotland. Not all of those who applied were successful, however, such as Blackhall, but some carried on regardless.

Further legislation which gave protection to historic buildings was passed in the 1960s. In 1966 The Scottish National Buildings Record was transferred to RCAHMS, thereby creating the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), along with the responsibility for the recording of threatened buildings. In the same year the Secretary of State for Scotland assumed responsibility for the Ancient Monuments Estate and the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland. In 1969, the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act gave formal protection for individual historic buildings (listed buildings). Furthermore, planning departments were required to consult with the Scottish Civic Trust (founded in 1967) on every plan proposing the demolition of any of the country's then listed buildings, numbering approximately 20,000 at the time. More teeth were added by the

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<sup>263</sup> Walker in Clow, 20

1972 Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act, which gave compulsory purchase powers to local authorities. Although seldom used in respect of castles, the threat may have prompted some owners of ruined properties to sell to prospective restorers, rather than face either the prospect of being forced to carry out expensive conservation work or having the property effectively confiscated. Captain Roderick Stirling, the owner of Fairburn Tower and 16,000 acres of Ross and Cromarty, was threatened with a compulsory repair order by Highland Council in 2003. It is not known whether either the threat or the repairs were carried out, however. In 1979 the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act was passed. The provisions of this act were quoted on Historic Scotland's website<sup>264</sup> as giving protection to Castle Tioram, the subject of much controversy over its proposed restoration. This is further discussed in chapter four. Throughout the period, a flurry of official publications, such as *The Care and Conservation of Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments by Government Departments in Scotland* in 1992, delineated good practice and gave a series of written references.

Walker suggested in 2000 that the period of change was almost over "for the very simple reason that the number of towers capable of restoration and available for purchase is now so limited."<sup>265</sup> It was correct to say that the number of unrestored towers available for restoration was now limited; however, it is not the case that there are hardly any left. There are around sixty small castles in private hands which could potentially be reoccupied after a rebuilding programme, although some are unlikely candidates for reasons of logistics (e.g. Dunskey), location (eg. Dunglass), owner intransigence (e.g. Inchdrewer) or size and complexity (e.g. Kenmure). Each successive piece of legislation, coupled with European legislation, strengthened the hand of the conservation lobby and gave further protection to the buildings.

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## THE REST OF THE BRITISH ISLES – ENGLAND, WALES AND IRELAND

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In contrast to the enthusiasm with which individual restorers set about buying up derelict castles and restoring them in Scotland, similar stories in the other countries of the British Isles are relatively few and far between. In England three cases have been identified, in Wales one and in Ireland (including both Northern Ireland and the Republic) fifteen. There may be a few more, as the research has not been quite as exhaustively thorough as with Scotland's castles, but the numbers are certainly very much smaller in England, Wales and Ireland than in Scotland. Why should this be? One possible reason might be that the supply of restorable derelict and ruinous castles is much smaller; this is certainly the case in England and Wales, where the majority of the 700 or so castles are large mediaeval fortresses, mostly in the care of the State or aristocratic or corporate owners. There are also, however, many large castellated Victorian mansions, of the type of building which has attracted restorers in other countries, including Ireland and Scotland. The one castle in Wales to have been restored as a private home (and bed and breakfast establishment/wedding venue) is a large mansion dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, whose

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<sup>264</sup> <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/news/indepth/castletioram.htm> accessed November 2009

<sup>265</sup> Walker in Clow, 29

size and derelict condition almost defeated the young couple who bought it in 1994 with few financial reserves and the intention of carrying out a large-scale DIY project. Judy Corbett wrote her account of the restoration of Gwydir Castle in a full-length book<sup>266</sup>; her narrative is discussed in chapter four. Two of the three English castles are situated in the north of the country and are 'peel' towers - Hellifield Peel in North Yorkshire and Brackenhill Tower near Longtown – typical of the 16th century architecture of the Borders country between Scotland and England, so that one might call them Scottish castles in England; the one remaining English castle is Walton Castle in Somerset, about which little is known.

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#### THE CURIOUS CASE OF IRELAND

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*I, the poet William Yeats,  
With old mill boards and sea-green slates,  
And smithy work from the Gort forge,  
Restored this tower for my wife George;  
And may these characters remain  
When all is ruin once again.*<sup>267</sup>

Ireland is more similar to Scotland in many ways – a small, relatively sparsely populated country in the British Isles with a strong sense of Celtic/national identity and a large number of castles, many of them small to medium sized towers in rural areas that have lain empty and ruinous for centuries. The popular literature on Irish castles is remarkably thin – there is no equivalent of the lengthy guides to Scottish castles by Mike Salter and Martin Coventry, or the Collins Castles of Scotland map, or even glossy coffee table books, which allow castle visitors to orient themselves and plan where to go. If the number of books published is a crude measure of the interest in a subject, then Ireland's castles have a low priority for the Irish and the diaspora. David Sweetman's *Irish Castles and Fortified Houses*<sup>268</sup> is one of the few popular books, of which only about ten are in print, and most of these have fewer than one hundred pages (Sweetman's has forty-eight pages). There are a few Internet sites, but most give only brief details of relatively few castles. A visitor new to Scotland wishing to tour the country's castles would be overwhelmed with information, both in printed form and via the Internet. A visitor to Ireland would have difficulty in planning a tour of the country's castles, unless s/he wanted to stay in castle hotels, of which there are around twenty, or visit the few which offer mediaeval banquets for tourists. James Charles Roy, an American historian who restored ruinous Moyode Castle, a mediaeval tower in County Galway, has been outspoken about the neglect with which most of the many unoccupied Irish castles are treated, apart from those maintained in the care of the government: ".....most others lie scattered to the winds in fields and woods, farms and villages – deserted, cracking, falling apart, home to cows, pigs, chickens, mice, bats, crows, pigeon coops, peat piles, rusted farm tools, straw, refuse and plastic feed bags. The smell of manure is their hallmark, the dank of slop

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<sup>266</sup> Judy Corbett **Castles in the Air** (2005) Ebury Press

<sup>267</sup> Poem carved on the wall of Thoor Ballylee, W.B. Yeats's restored tower in Ireland

<sup>268</sup> David Sweetman **Irish castles and Fortified Houses** (1995) Town House and Country House, Dublin

and dripping ivy their atmosphere.”<sup>269</sup> Roy does not give numbers and it is difficult to find any figures for how many ruined castles might potentially be available for restoration, but the number is almost certainly higher than in Scotland, which has about sixty – some of which are in the same kind of neglected rural situation that Roy describes. During the Irish Civil War, some grand houses and castles were attacked by Republicans as symbols of Protestant oppression. Leap Castle, Roxborough House and Moyode House, for example, were all burned down in 1922.

Three first-person narratives of the restoration of Irish castles, all by non-Irish men, have been identified. One is by Jeremy Irons, the English actor who starred in the 1981 BBC television series *Brideshead Revisited*, who restored Kilcoe Castle, one by Nicholas Brown, an English ‘adventurer’ and the third by the American historian, James Charles Roy, whose writing is carefully nuanced, candid and introspective. There is also an anonymous lengthy account of the restoration of Castle Hyde by Michael Flatley, the Irish dancer and impresario, on his personal website; it is written in such a glowing and adulatory tone that one suspects it is really a first-person narrative in disguise, e.g.: “Castle Hyde's rebirth is an extraordinary phenomenon, and for Ireland, quite the most important and precious project Michael has ever undertaken. It may well be the ultimate masterpiece creation of his genius, no matter what other wonderful shows he may come up with in the future.”<sup>270</sup> Castle Hyde is a large eighteenth century mansion which had become seriously dilapidated by 1999 when Michael Flatley purchased it and spent ten years restoring it ‘at lavish expense’.

Throughout the period which this research covers, only fifteen Irish castles were bought and restored from a ruinous condition, and only three between 1945 and 1990. Of those three, two were bought by Americans. Overall, out of the fifteen restored, at least six were bought by non-Irish outsiders. This is an enormous contrast to the situation in Scotland, where the majority of restorers have been Scottish, or have at least lived in the country for much of their lives before purchasing a castle. During the 1980s, no restoration projects were started in Ireland; this may have to do with the ‘Troubles’ which made the political situation unstable, at least in Northern Ireland and the Border regions of the Republic, or possibly because the Irish economy was in a bad state, with high unemployment, high taxes and high emigration until around 1990, when policy changes coincided with the start of an economic upturn. Yet Scotland was also in the doldrums economically at the same time. The question is, did the weight of Irish history, in its rejection of the mainly English rich landowners after 1922, make it almost impossible for its people, beyond a few dedicated academic archaeologists and castellologists, to see any value in the heritage of ruined towers? This is an interesting question, but unfortunately one which is outside the scope of this research. But in the years just before 1922, one famous Irishman did restore a tower; the poet W.B. Yeats purchased and restored a sixteenth century tower, Thoor Ballylee, in 1916 – 1922, as a summer home. He employed the architect William A. Scott to draw up plans for the restoration and to design the furniture.

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<sup>269</sup> James Charles Roy *The Fields Of Athenry* (2003) Westview Press, Oxford, 6

<sup>270</sup> <http://www.michaelflatleyireland.com/castlehyde.htm> accessed October 2010

When we consider the difficulties associated with the move into Thoor Ballylee – the expensive roof repairs, the need to have much of the furniture carpentered in situ because of the narrow stairway, the primitive sanitation, the constant flooding and dampness that finally drove the family out again – we are justified in assuming that it must have been a powerful compulsion that prompted Yeats to acquire the property. Indeed, the purchase was regarded as such a folly by his friends that Ezra Pound wickedly remarked that Yeats had undertaken his lecture tour to America in 1920 “to make enough to buy a few shingles for his phallic symbol on the Bogs. Ballyphallus or whatever he calls it with the river on the first floor.”<sup>271</sup>

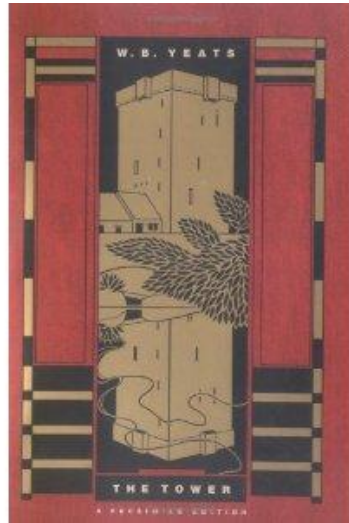
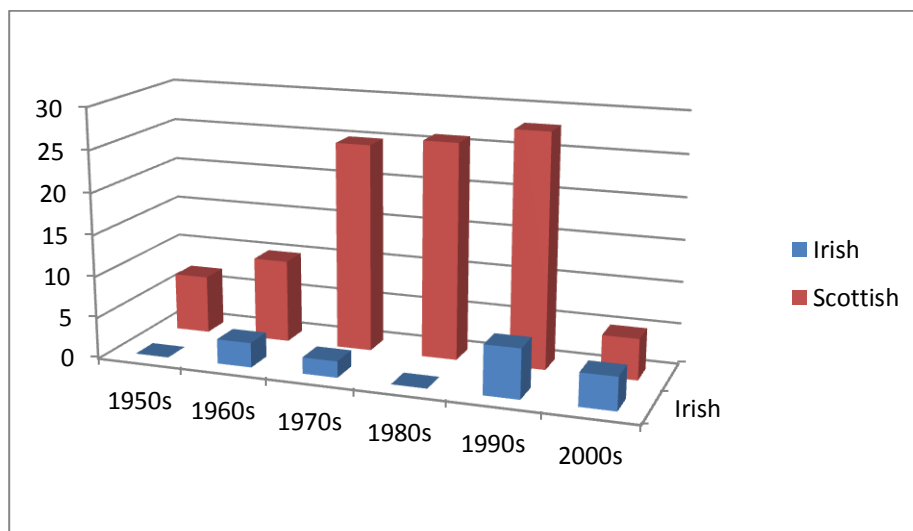


FIGURE 30 COVER OF 'THE TOWER' BY W.B.YEATS, ILLUSTRATING THOOR BALLYLEE



**Table 5 Numbers of Irish castle restorations begun by individual new owners in each decade (includes both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) with Scottish restorations behind**

<sup>271</sup> Ziolkowski *The View from the Tower*, 49

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## THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT & BEYOND

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Compared to other Europeans, we live in similar houses, drive similar cars and eat similar food. We are educated in much the same way, work at the same kind of jobs, and produce the same kind of products, even for the same companies.<sup>272</sup>

McCrone is being somewhat provocative here. When he asks if Scotland is simply another European nation, reduced by its similarities to others to a small part of a globalized entity, his answer is emphatically *No*. For all the talk of globalization – and the world has indeed shrunk, due to modern communication technologies which allow us to share ideas and experiences instantly across the globe – Scotland and the other nations of Europe still retain recognizably individual cultural identities. As Judt pointed out in his magisterial overview of the development of Europe since 1945, “Europe is the smallest continent .....But in the intensity of its internal differences and contrasts, Europe is unique.”<sup>273</sup> The United Kingdom is also a country of internal differences, between England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Castles are icons in many European countries – particularly France, Germany, Spain and Central Europe – just as they are in Scotland, but their treatment differs according to local cultural mores, social structures, the political environment and historical events. Just as the reasons for rebuilding and attitudes towards the built heritage changed over time in Scotland, so the treatment of castles and other significant buildings (of the kind which would be ‘listed’ in the UK), differs from country to country and also within countries over time. All European countries have some sort of conservation bodies and legislation in place to protect historic buildings, but the extent to which they have ‘teeth’ and are willing to use them varies between and even within countries.

More than any other section, this one, with its overview of the whole world (with a focus on Europe) is necessarily highly selective. It is impossible to represent the situation in all other countries beyond Scotland in any depth; what is offered is a smorgasbord of pieces of information that highlight some of the differences and similarities between Scotland and other places. Touched upon are war and politics, the uses to which castles are put in Europe, restoration projects in Europe and castles in the rest of the world. Several first person narratives have been found which describe the restoration of castles in Europe, the majority by British people, and these are described and extracts reproduced in chapter five. There may be many more, written in the languages of the countries where the castles are sited and not readily accessible in the international literature. These European restoration projects have all been on a much grander scale than the majority of those in Scotland, even though most have been undertaken by individuals, since the buildings available for restoration are usually very much larger than the small Scottish towers that have been restored in the second half of the twentieth century.

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<sup>272</sup> David McCrone **Understanding Scotland. The Sociology of a Nation**, 5

<sup>273</sup> Tony Judt **Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945**, xiii



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## WAR AND PEACE

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But there has always been another war against architecture going on – the destruction of the cultural artefacts of an enemy people or nation as a means of dominating, terrorizing, dividing or eradicating it altogether.... Here, architecture takes on a totemic quality.... This is not ‘collateral damage’. This is the active and often systematic destruction of particular building types or architectural traditions that happens in conflicts where the erasure of the memories, history and identity attached to architecture and place – enforced forgetting – is the goal itself.<sup>274</sup>

The symbolic nature of architecture was highlighted in a chilling way by the destruction of New York’s World Trade Center twin towers in 2001; the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks understood what Bevan calls the ‘totemic’ nature of architecture, with their carefully chosen targets. The politics of war and international relations have had a significant impact on the treatment of castles and other historic buildings. The numbers of European castle restorations, as in Scotland, increased steadily throughout the period 1945 - 2010, but war damage caused a greater amount of restoration activity in the 1950s in Europe, when many buildings had to be extensively repaired after bombing raids - for example Kasteel Ammersoyen in The Netherlands, restored from 1959 - 74. Other damaged castles were either demolished or were left as ruins, e.g. Brancialino in Italy, which was eventually restored from a ruinous state in 2008 by a couple from the UK. The story of the restoration was broadcast on a *Grand Designs* television programme in 2008 and the narrative is on the website of the Telegraph newspaper.<sup>275</sup>



FIGURE 31 KASTEEL AMMERSOYEN IN THE NETHERLANDS

In some European cities which were terribly damaged during WW2, such as Rotterdam and Frankfurt, new buildings in modern style were erected upon the sites of the ruins; in others, such as Dresden and Munich, the mediaeval architecture was rebuilt, so that twenty-first century

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<sup>274</sup> Robert Bevan **The Destruction of Memory. Architecture at War**, 8

<sup>275</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/property/overseasproperty/3363845/Grand-Designs-Mad-but-mostly-magnifico.html> accessed November 2010



visitors can never envisage the scale of the destruction, except in photographs. However, the end of WW2 did not mark the end of violent conflict in Europe, despite the *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, issued in 1954 as a result of The Hague Convention in 1954. The former Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Ireland all suffered both human casualties and ‘collateral’ and/or deliberate damage to buildings in wars and revolutions in the post WW2 period; perhaps the most famous, or notorious, was the sixteenth century Stari Most Bridge in Mostar in 1993, which was reconstructed with the help of UNESCO. “The reconstructed Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar is a symbol of reconciliation, international cooperation and of the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities.”<sup>276</sup> Architecture is a powerful symbol of cultural identity throughout the world, and can also be a symbol, as with Stari Most Bridge, of reconciliation.

In addition to violent conflicts after WW2, wanton destruction of the historic built environment in the name of ‘progress’ occurred throughout Europe, as it had in Britain:

In the physical history of the European city, the 1950s and 1960s were truly terrible decades. The damage that was done to the material fabric of urban life in those years is the dark, still half-unacknowledged underside of the ‘thirty glorious years’ of economic development. ....Major cities – Frankfurt, Brussels, London above all – discovered too late that they had sold their urban birthright for a mess of brutalist pottage.<sup>277</sup>

Judt’s powerful metaphor reflects the realization, through the efforts of campaigning bodies and individuals, of what had been lost architecturally that led to the series of European conservation initiatives described in the next section.



FIGURE 32 DRESDEN AFTER WW2<sup>278</sup>

<sup>276</sup> UNESCO World heritage Convention webpage: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/946> accessed November 2010

<sup>277</sup> Tony Judt **Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945**, 388

<sup>278</sup> <http://www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/fotostrecke-56828.html> - pictures of German cities emerging from the ruins

In Eastern Europe under Communism post WW2, castles mainly became state property:

Most, over the past half century, were stripped of their glamour after being confiscated and declared state property. A select few remained open to the public and were furnished to reflect a particular theme. Portraits and religious art were kept sealed in reserves. But for the most part, palaces were transformed into orphanages, boarding schools, centres for the disabled, retirement homes, summer camps, hospitals or state farms. Some served as hunting lodges for the nomenklatura.<sup>279</sup>

Lord Michael Pratt's huge study of the great country houses (and their owners) of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland after the fall of Communism illustrates the fabulous quality of buildings and contents that still exist, despite lack of care in many cases. "For some years now all three governments, realizing the potential for tourism, have been concerned with restoring their architectural heritage after years of neglect."<sup>280</sup> He went on to bring up the difficult question of governments giving houses and castles back to their original owning families: "Without some additional assets to pay for the upkeep of a big property, many former owners understandably hesitate to take on the burden, even if their homes with their contents are offered back gratis. And certainly they cannot all be turned into hotels or conference centers, as some optimists choose to imagine."<sup>281</sup> The American Chamber of Commerce in Hungary ran an article in 2001 about exiled property owners returning home, under the sub-headline: "Hungarian Castles, Veritable Jewels Of European Heritage, are Left in All but Tattered Ruins. Will New Government Initiatives Save Their Grace?" and told the story of Ferenc Nádasdy:

When Ferenc Nádasdy returned to Hungary in 1991, having fled his native country during the 1956 Revolution, he came back to pick up the tattered pieces of his family heritage. "I wasn't the type of person who would rush home to fish in muddy waters," said Mr. Nádasdy, who was spurred on by a newspaper ad sent to him by a friend which described how the Nádasdy castle, his childhood home, was put up for sale. It was then that Mr. Nádasdy's reluctance faded away. "I came home and stopped it," he said. Upon his return to Hungary, Mr. Nádasdy found a castle in ruins: a leaking roof, moss covered walls, and a deteriorated interior, left abandoned after years of neglect under the former Communist rule. Mr. Nádasdy subsequently set up a foundation and began the process of raising funds to restore his one-time home.<sup>282</sup>

It may well be over-optimistic to suppose that all restored castles in Eastern Europe can be turned into hotels or conference centres, as Pratt claimed, but in Scotland about twenty to twenty-five per cent of all castles, at a rough estimate, admit people who pay to be there, whether as day-tripping tourists, overnight guests or wedding or conference attendees, as a result of the increasing commercialisation of castles. This is further discussed in chapter four. Castles have become big business in Scotland, and the same is the case in Europe. The number of castle hotels

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<sup>279</sup> Cynthia Guttman 'Central Europe: castles gear up for business' **Unesco Courier** July/August 1999, 49-50

<sup>280</sup> Lord Michael Pratt **The Great Country Houses of Central Europe: Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland** (1991) Abbeville Press, New York, 8

<sup>281</sup> Ibid, 9

<sup>282</sup> Edith Balázs 'Castle Restoration: No Fairy Tale' **Business Hungary** vol 15 no. 2 Feb 2001

in European countries is large and expanding; many English language websites dedicated to castle hotels throughout Europe are on the Internet. Spain and Portugal have had state-run castle hotel 'paradores' and 'poussadas' since the 1920s and 1940s respectively; other European countries have private establishments run by families (some 'old') and luxury hotel chains such as *Relais & Chateaux* promote castle hotel holidays throughout the world. Guests are lured by the same kind of rhetoric as in the UK by accommodation agencies such as *Celtic Castles*<sup>283</sup>, which promote castle hotels and self-catering castles. The German newspaper, *Rheinische Post*, ran a feature on its website in 2010 about castles offering holiday accommodation. The headline was *Hier können Sie einmal Schlossherr sein*<sup>284</sup> (Here you can be lord of the manor for a while), which echoes the 'laird of the castle' notion that British newspapers find so attractive.

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## EUROPEAN PROTECTION BODIES AND EVENTS

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EAHY [European Architectural Heritage Year] was late in coming but it would probably not have happened much earlier on such a scale, as the climate only began to change in response to the damage being done. Yet everywhere, it seemed, people were awakening to appreciate the orgies of destruction, gradual erosion and other disasters that had been happening all along."<sup>285</sup>

### A chronology of protection events

In Europe, as in Britain, issues to do with the conservation and restoration of historic buildings were hotly discussed amongst at least some parts of the architectural and historical professions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. William Morris and John Ruskin in England campaigned against restoration (as opposed to conservation) and against the work of 'inauthentic' architects such as the Viollet-le-Duc, the Gothic revivalist who restored and 'enhanced' Notre Dame de Paris and Carcassonne, among many other mediaeval buildings in France, in the mid nineteenth century. Ruskin published *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* in 1880:

Neither by the public, nor by those who have the care of public monuments, is the true meaning of the word *restoration* understood. It means the most total destruction which a building can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered: a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is *impossible*, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture<sup>286</sup>

Such views gained ground in Europe and in 1931, the First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments was held in Athens. The *Athens Charter* which resulted

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<sup>283</sup> [www.celticcastles.com](http://www.celticcastles.com)

<sup>284</sup> [http://www.rp-online.de/reise/Hier-koennen-Sie-einmal-Schlossherr-sein\\_bid\\_29077.html](http://www.rp-online.de/reise/Hier-koennen-Sie-einmal-Schlossherr-sein_bid_29077.html)  
accessed 10 Sept 2010

<sup>285</sup> James Stevens Curl 'European Architectural Heritage Year 1975' in Lester Borley (ed) **Dear Maurice. Culture and Identity in Late Twentieth Century Scotland**, 208. James Stevens Curl was architectural advisor to the Scottish Campaign of EAHY

<sup>286</sup> John Ruskin. ([1880] 1989). **The Seven Lamps of Architecture**. New York: Dover Publications, 194

proscribed 'integrative' restoration (of the type which Billings and Lorimer had favoured in Scotland) and instead insisted upon an approach that preserved each successive previous intervention, encouraging a view of old buildings as historical documents. In 1959 The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) was founded in Rome, under the auspices of the Cultural Heritage Division of UNESCO, and in 1964 the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments was held in Venice. The resulting *Venice Charter* superseded the *Athens Charter* and became the standard against which all subsequent conservation policy documents were written and all policies judged internationally. In its sixteen paragraphs the Venice Charter stresses the importance of setting, respect for original fabric, precise documentation of any intervention, the significance of contributions from all periods to the building's character, and the maintenance of historic buildings for a socially useful purpose<sup>287</sup>. Historic Scotland cited articles 3, 9 and 19 of the *Venice Charter* in its assessment (and rejection) of the proposals for the reconstruction of Castle Tioram<sup>288</sup>, although rather bizarrely, it also cited a number of articles from the *Burra Charter*, which was the adaptation of the *Venice Charter* by the Australian ICOMOS Committee, specifically for the Australian situation.

In the 1960s, three important international conservation NGOs were set up: Europa Nostra, the pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage, was established in 1963; in 1965 The International Council of Monument and Sites (ICOMOS) was set up and in 1966 the ICOM Committee for Conservation was set up in New York. All three of these NGOs continue to campaign, research, formulate policy and disseminate information on matters of heritage and conservation at an international level and all have grown in size and influence since they were founded.

The mid-1970s were pivotal in Europe, as in the UK. 1975 was the year in which UNESCO's World Heritage Convention came into force and it was also European Architectural Heritage Year (EAHY). In October 1985, during the 2nd Council of Europe Conference of European Ministers responsible for Architectural Heritage, the "Monuments' Open Doors" initiative, which had been launched in France in 1984, was extended to a European level. Several European countries, including The Netherlands, Luxemburg, Malta, Belgium, Scotland and Sweden soon set up similar events. In 1991, the Council of Europe officially launched the European Heritage Days (EHDs) with the support of the European Commission. Throughout Europe, during the weekends of September, the European Heritage Days open the doors of numerous monuments and sites, many of them usually closed to the public. Scottish castles are encouraged to participate by Historic Scotland. In September 1999 the Council of Europe launched a year-long campaign, *Europe: A Common Heritage*, to promote awareness of the historic environment. In 2000 the UK Government signed the Valetta Convention (The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage) which came into effect in the UK in March 2001. All of these events and initiatives

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<sup>287</sup> Full text is available at [http://www.icomos.org/venice\\_charter.html](http://www.icomos.org/venice_charter.html)

<sup>288</sup> Historic Scotland Public Inquiry Report (2002)14.1 and 14.3 full text available at <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/news/indepth/castletioram/publicinquiryreport.htm>

combined to help change the climate of opinion throughout Europe with regard to the protection of the historic built environment.

However, in times of recession, even the richest of countries may cut back on heritage spending. In Switzerland in 2007 the canton of Bern announced plans to sell thirteen castles which it owned and used for museums and council offices in order to cut maintenance costs:

But politicians and heritage watchdogs fear that the castles will end up in the hands of Russian oligarchs or Arab sheikhs who will damage the country's cultural legacy by making tasteless "upgrades" and inappropriate additions. They are also angry that the properties will disappear into private hands and no longer be accessible to the public.<sup>289</sup>

Some of Scotland's castles may have suffered neglect at the hands of private owners, but at least there has not been any sell-off of properties in the care of the state and they continue to be well cared for, although the track record of local councils which own castles is less consistently good.

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## EUROPEAN CASTLES

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The factors which inspired the rebuilding of actual castle ruins ranged from a romantic yearning for an ideal age, a desire to buttress the power of the Prussian state, aristocratic ambition and bourgeois pretension, to tourism, nationalistic pride, scholarly interest and the Heimat movement.<sup>290</sup>

In his book about the restorations of the castles of the Rhine in the late nineteenth century, Robert Taylor examined "the growing cult of the Rhine and its castles as a sacred national landscape"<sup>291</sup> Referring to the decades beginning with the 1880s, he described a conservative political movement, suffused with romanticism, and described 'monument fever' when nobles began to acquire ruins to restore<sup>292</sup>. Taylor ascribed the movement to a reaction to growing challenges to the status of the nobility in the nineteenth century. "Restoring or building castles or just preserving their ruins was one way in which they tried to legitimize their social and political raison d'être. They hoped that their rebuilt castle would be an effective 'symbol of power'".<sup>293</sup> This was at a time when McGibbon and Ross were lamenting the sorry state of Scotland's castles; although the numbers of restorations grew from the 1870s to 1914, there was only a handful in each decade, and nothing that could be called a movement, although Ranald MacInnes identified the years after 1911 in Scotland as "the climax of another grandiose fashion, namely the

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<sup>289</sup> Bojan Pancevski 'Swiss seething over great castle sell-off' 30 September 2007 **Daily Telegraph**

<sup>290</sup> Robert R. Taylor **The Castles of The Rhine. Recreating the Middle Ages in Modern Germany** (1999) Wilfred Laurier University Press, Ontario, Canada, 305

<sup>291</sup> Ibid, 168

<sup>292</sup> Ibid, 170

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, 47

‘restoration’ of fantasy castles in rock-faced rubble”<sup>294</sup> In the castle restorations of the second half of the twentieth century in Scotland, some of the inspirational factors which Taylor ascribed to the Prussian ‘cult’ chime well with the Scottish situation (a romantic yearning for an ideal age, bourgeois pretension, nationalistic pride and scholarly interest, in particular), but the root cause, of aristocratic status legitimization, was very different. It is, however, the same as the motive ascribed to the Scottish aristocracy for their ‘heritage entrepreneurship’ by David McCrone (see chapter two). In Ireland, a romantic yearning for an ideal age, bourgeois pretension, nationalistic pride and scholarly interest also describe very well the motives for the Yeats’ restoration of Thoor Ballylee in the same time period as the Prussian nobles were asserting their status through castle restoration. In Romania, Queen Marie, granddaughter of Queen Victoria, restored Castle Bran, which had been gifted to her in 1920 by the City of Brasov. It had been one of the seven strongholds built by the Knights of the Teutonic Order and had never been lived in, although its foundations dated back to the Crusades.<sup>295</sup> She wrote about the experience in her memoirs:

Oh! with what joy and interest I set about making my Bran livable, putting in certain comforts, letting in more light, repairing the shaky galleries, creating new rooms in odd corners; making use of the huge timbered loft, using waste spaces, digging out secret little passages and stairs, turning queer little dungeons into living-rooms, but withal taking greatest care to preserve the austere, primitive aspect of the place. We have a dear old architect belonging to our house-hold, inherited from King Carol's times. He, too, had always dreamed that one day it would be granted him to repair an old castle; now this quaint building has become his pet work. He has settled down there like an owl in an old wall and devotes all his love, all his skill, to make a real treasure out of my precious little place. But we are in no hurry to complete our work, we are like children with a beloved toy of which we never weary; each year we improve something, without allowing its original aspect to change. It is still the impregnable, pugnacious little fortress, but now it has been given a soul, its eyes are open, it is wide awake, joyfully alive.<sup>296</sup>

In Queen Marie’s account, although marked by differences of time, distance, resources and culture, can be seen the same threads of romance, anti-modernism, adventure and fun which are present in so many of the Scottish narratives in chapter five. The metaphor of the castle as a toy, as a pet, then as a person is echoed in some of the personifications in the Scottish narratives, as is the fact that she furnished the castle with traditional Romanian crafts and artifacts, in the same way that many Scottish restorers favour tartan and ‘authentic’ Scottish Jacobean furniture.

In more recent times, many castles across Europe have been restored by individuals, charitable trusts and public bodies (although few in Ireland), but it is not possible within the scope of this thesis to survey the numbers and types of projects, nor the extent to which governments offer

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<sup>294</sup> Ranald MacInnes ‘Rubblemania’: Ethic and Aesthetic in Scottish Architecture’ **Journal of Design History** Vol 9 No 3 1996, 145

<sup>295</sup> Hannah Pakula **The Last Romantic. The life of the legendary Marie, Queen of Roumania, the most famous beauty, heroine and royal celebrity of her time** (1986) Simon and Schuster, New York, 310

<sup>296</sup> Queen Marie of Roumania **The Country That I Love - An Exile's Memories** (1925) Duckworth, London, Chapter XV ‘Brana the Beloved’

support, neutrality or hindrance. The situation with regards to heritage conservation in Scotland, a small, relatively prosperous and politically stable country, is complex and changing; throughout Europe, although forty countries have ICOMOS National Committees and should, therefore, subscribe to the same doctrines, there are doubtless huge disparities between them in heritage conservation philosophies and their application in practice.

A massive project in France was the restoration of Chateau de Bagnols in Beaujolais between 1987 and 1991 by Lady Hamlyn, an English designer:

When Lady Hamlyn first set eyes on the Chateau de Bagnols, it was little more than a rotting shell, with cracked walls, and a roof like a sieve. The moat was a muddy ditch, and more than a hundred rooks lived in one of its derelict towers.....By the time the Hamlyns arrived rainwater could cascade inside, wrecking Renaissance frescoes and rotting its ornate carvings, wall-paintings and historic fireplaces. The cobbled courtyard looked like a bomb-site. In fact, it was a bomb site: dynamited by a previous owner searching for treasure looted by the Nazis. "It wasn't safe even to go inside," Lady Hamlyn discovered on her first visit. "I thought 'this is too much, even for me'."

Yet the place continued to haunt her, and a year later Lady Hamlyn returned with husband [the wealthy publisher, Paul Hamlyn] in tow. "We could see the wonderful view, and its golden stone glowing, and I knew it deserved to be saved. In a weak moment, my husband agreed, and that's where our problems began." The resulting project is said to have cost more than £10m, and saw 400 specialist builders and craftsmen working day and night to return the building to its Gothic and Renaissance glory. The process sparked a running battle with Monuments Historiques, the French version of English Heritage. "We had a ghastly time with them. They had classified it as a 19<sup>th</sup> century interior, and didn't know that all these incredible older paintings and frescoes were hidden behind the newer facades. I wanted to take the building back as far as we could, but they just didn't understand it. It was a fight, because they said 'you can't touch anything'. They were threatening to stop the works, and it turned into a bit of a battle royal."



FIGURE 33 CHATEAU DE BAGNOLS<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> <http://www.our-hotels.com/Romantic-Place-to-Wed/france-chau-de-bagnols.html> accessed March 2011



Despite the battles with the French government, (which were probably informed by Article 11 of the Venice Charter : “When a building includes the superimposed works of different periods, the revealing of the underlying state can only be justified in exceptional circumstances.”) Lady Hamlyn was appointed *Chevalier de l’Ordre des Artes et Lettres* by the French government for the restoration of Chateau de Bagnols, which became a luxury hotel. Scottish restorers also had many difficulties with government officials, as is discussed in chapters four and five, but none was ever decorated or officially recognised in any way for their restorations, and it is difficult to imagine a climate in Scotland where this might have happened between 1945 and 2010. Restorers received plenty of plaudits from the media, but no official thanks or recognition at government level. Both Lady Hamlyn and Michel Guyot talk about ‘saving’ the castles they restored; rescue is yet another one of the themes of the Scottish restorers, addressed in chapter five.

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## THE REST OF THE WORLD

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One need only drive through an American suburb to see towers, miniature crenellations, and conical witches’ hat roofs rising above wooden houses set in manicured lawns. The castle has had a remarkable afterlife.<sup>298</sup>

North America has hundreds of castles; over 700 are listed on the Castles of the United States website<sup>299</sup>, and 52 on the Castles of Canada website<sup>300</sup>. All are ‘new’, with none dating before the nineteenth century, and most have been built with a breezy disregard for any kind of stylistic coherence or Old World authenticity, reflecting only the idea that ‘castle’ represented to the builders and owners. ‘Scottish’ is often a part of the mix. Craigdarroch Castle in Canada is typical of the ‘bonanza castles’ built by wealthy men in the Victorian period:

The architecture of the castle reflects the character of Dunsmuir who wanted the largest and most expensive house in western Canada, reminiscent of his Scottish heritage, and to dominate the landscape of Victoria..... The Craigdarroch eclecticism borrows from several styles, characterized by: steeply pitched hipped roof, round spires and decorated gables borrowed from the Château style; entrance and window detailing and stonework on wall surfaces from Romanesque Revival; Gothic windows, Jacobean dormers, balconettes, corbelling and variations in texture and colour associated with the Queen Anne Revival style.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Marilyn Stokstad **Medieval Castles** (2005) Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 92

<sup>299</sup> <http://www.dupontcastle.com/castles/> accessed September 2010

<sup>300</sup> [http://www.canadacastle.hpg.ig.com.br/prov\\_en.htm](http://www.canadacastle.hpg.ig.com.br/prov_en.htm) accessed September 2010

<sup>301</sup> [http://www.canadacastle.hpg.ig.com.br/C2\\_en.htm](http://www.canadacastle.hpg.ig.com.br/C2_en.htm) accessed September 2010





FIGURE 34 CRAIGDARROCH CASTLE IN CANADA<sup>302</sup>

There are mock Scottish baronial mansions in odd corners of Australia, New Zealand, Trinidad, South Africa, and doubtless many more countries, a legacy of colonialization.



FIGURE 35 STOLLMAYER'S 'BALMORAL' CASTLE IN TRINIDAD<sup>303</sup>

Throughout the Old World, the Middle and Far East, Africa and Asia all have many splendid ancient castles. Everywhere, castles hold the same attraction to those fascinated by fortifications and grandeur; the palaces of India, the castles of Japan, the Crusader fortresses of Turkey, between them attract millions of visits per year, and their governments contribute towards upkeep. The issues of conservation and restoration are taken seriously by the ICOMOS committees (more than seventy of which exist in countries outside Europe), although, as in Europe, there are differences in governmental commitment and application of principles between countries.

<sup>302</sup> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/pleonasm/20272930/> accessed September 2010

<sup>303</sup> <http://www.intlistings.com/articles/2008/top-25-most-beautiful-castles-in-the-world/> accessed October 2010

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## CONCLUSIONS

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In this chapter the question of why change flourished in Scotland in the second half of the twentieth century has been raised and a description and analysis of the social, political and cultural context in which the 'renaissance' of Scotland's castles took place has been provided. What was the social context which allowed so many 'new' owners to feel emboldened to take on the risk of a ruinous building? How did the campaigners contribute to changing the climate of opinion in Britain? In both the UK and Europe, a significant shift in attitudes towards historic buildings took place in the mid-1970s, when conservation bodies, backed by legislation, helped to turn the tide from the destruction to conservation and restoration. Generalizations are not easy, but it is possible, in Europe at least, to see a clear pattern of increased commitment to conservation throughout the post WW2 period. During this period the UK was not alone in witnessing a gradual change in attitude to old buildings, that of greater respect, increasingly formalized through legislation and the setting up of bodies with the express purpose of heritage protection. What impact did legislation have on the owners of castles, old and new? It is clear that there were major changes in attitudes towards the historic built environment, not only in the UK, but throughout Europe, alongside changes in social class structure and the economic circumstances of individual citizens, which allowed certain people to feel able to take that risk. The next chapter looks at who these people were, with a survey of the owners of restored castles, and also of the buildings which they chose to restore.

### CHAPTER THREE: CASTLES & OWNERS - THE SURVEYS

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Once upon a time, living in a Scottish castle was the reserve of the very titled or the very famous – people who by privilege of birth accepted their vastly proportioned home as their given lot; or those who, by way of fame or fortune, desired the prestige of owning such a home so much as to pay through the nose for such a privilege. But now there seems to be a new kid muscling in on the country pile block – untitled, relatively unknown and providing just the right injection of cash and enthusiasm to transform these beautiful Scottish landmarks back to their original glory.<sup>304</sup>

In this chapter are the results of the surveys of the Scottish castles which were rebuilt and reoccupied between 1945 and 2010, and of the owners who commissioned and/or carried out the work. Statistics on the location, size, end use, decade of building and time taken to rebuild castles are given, and the ‘types’ of owners are categorized and analysed. Both the owners and the buildings themselves are centrally important to a history of changes in Scottish castles and their reoccupation. It is difficult to separate owners and buildings, because so often the relationship has been symbiotic. The identity of owners becomes bound up with their building, particularly when clans, ancient families and lineage are involved; amongst those who use a title, many are called by the name of their castle – thus, the Laird of Balgonie, the Baron of Ravenstone, Lord Steel of Aikwood. The building, of course, could not survive or change without the will and actions of its owners. Logistically, it makes sense first to describe and analyze the buildings, then move on to the owners; finally, a chronological account of the projects is given.

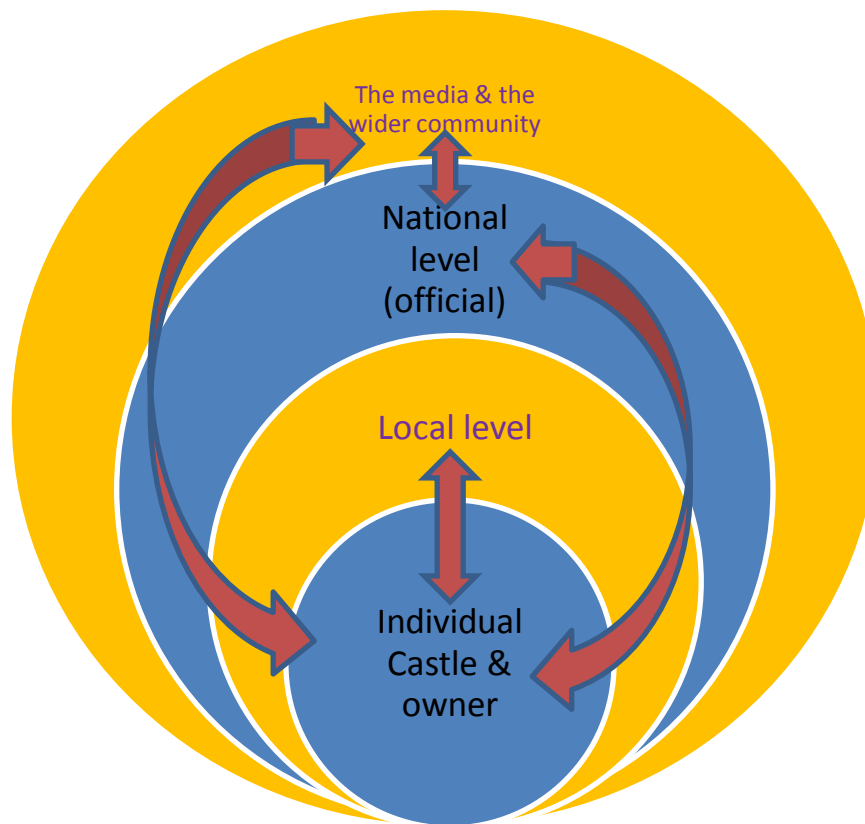
This chapter firstly presents a statistical survey of 102 Scottish castles restored between 1945 and 2010, whilst acknowledging the dangers of a positivistic approach. Empirical data can give the impression that the ‘truth’ has been uncovered and mask questions of greater depth; without reasonably precise knowledge of how many, however, there can be no understanding of why. Decisions on which buildings to include and which to leave out have not been easy, despite ostensibly unequivocal criteria (i.e. any building which is known as a castle that was rebuilt from a ruinous or derelict state to one which was habitable). Sixteen further buildings were considered for inclusion, but finally excluded from the statistics, either because they were not quite derelict or their restoration was not finished, or they did not quite qualify as a ‘castle’ (see appendix 4 for the list). There may be some buildings included in the statistics which are debatable; inevitably, some sit at the margins of qualification on various criteria. All of the 102 castle-type buildings surveyed were reoccupied from a ruinous or derelict state, and data has been collected on factors of location, condition, availability, size, building type, end use and time taken to rebuild. These factors are not only interesting, they are fundamental in order to gain an overview of what was happening, and to assess the relative significance of various factors. In terms of the owners, the questions asked about them are demographic ones about profession, family status, nationality, gender and financial means and also about how many had ‘hands-on’ involvement. How many were ‘buying back’ the family heritage? Were they individuals, couples or corporate groups, ‘new’ or ‘old’ owners? From whom were would-be restorers buying? The data are presented using

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<sup>304</sup> Pam Wilson ‘Kings of the Castles’ **The Sunday Herald** 7 December 2003

descriptive statistics, in forms that make visual sense for quick interpretation; most are in simple tables, supplemented by bar charts and pie charts where appropriate.

Following the statistical surveys, further details are given of the restorations in Section 3 *When were the restorers?*, which describes the projects chronologically, decade by decade, in order to identify the changes which took place over time. Not only did the numbers of restorations rise in each subsequent decade from the 1950s to the 1990s, but there were also qualitative changes in the type of owners and the end uses of the buildings, which are described and analysed. By examining the data from three different angles – buildings, owners and chronology – it is possible to gain a well-rounded and thorough picture of the restoration projects which are the subject of the thesis.



**Table 6 A Systems Model to show the interactive nature of the influences involved in castle restoration**

Although the statistical data are mainly straightforward – once ambiguous classification categories, such as ‘small’, ‘medium’ and ‘large’ are clarified – the interrelationships between the people and bodies involved in castle restoration are complex. A systems model is offered here, to go some way towards illustrating the multi-layered, multi-directional nature of influences upon building restoration projects. At the heart of this model are two things: the individual castles, with

their peculiar set of characteristics – availability, cost, location, size, attractiveness and condition – and the owners, also with their individual characteristics, of varying temperament, degrees of wealth, knowledge, social support and experience. At the second level is the local community, which includes neighbours, councillors, planning and building officials and the local media. At the third, national level are Historic Scotland, MPs and Parliament. At the fourth, macro level are the media and the wider international community, including European statutory bodies. Each level has an impact on the others. The individual who owns a ruinous or derelict castle, for example, can influence neighbours and both local and national officials to support the project through personal communications and lobbying; the media can also influence them with campaigns in favour of specific projects or general pro-heritage coverage. Individual would-be restorers can be persuaded by the media that taking on a restoration project is feasible – but the castle they choose may be especially valued in its ruinous state by the local community (e.g. Portencross) or by government officials (e.g. Tioram<sup>305</sup>) who are not willing to countenance reoccupation and take measures to block the plans of an individual owner. The obstacles in the way of a restoration may be formidable and many have been completed in spite of huge difficulties.

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## SECTION 1: THE REOCCUPIED BUILDINGS

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It is a reverend thing, to see an ancient castle or building, not in decay<sup>306</sup>

The seductive attraction of the ruined castle, allied with a drive to mend what is broken, to restore what can be saved, and the motivation and means to do so, make a powerful combination. ‘Reoccupied’ means that all of the buildings surveyed were made habitable – i.e. furnished and with all basic essential services for modern living, including bathrooms, kitchens and some kind of heating system. They were in various states of dilapidation before restoration, from roofless shells uninhabited for over two hundred years – for example, Abbot’s Tower in Dumfriesshire – to recently abandoned mansions which were crumbling and leaking too much to support basic needs for safe shelter, such as Gogar Castle in Edinburgh. The peculiarly Scottish characteristics of the castles described here – in particular, the domestic scale of most of them – have a direct bearing on their restorability and availability. The iconic nature of the buildings for a Scottish sense of identity has doubtless had a powerful impact on would-be restorers, but this is difficult to quantify, and needs to be viewed in the wider context of changes in attitudes towards the built heritage in general and national consciousness, as described in chapter two. Taking the widest possible definition of ‘castle’ and looking at ‘restoration’ in its broadest sense (including buildings not quite finished in 2010 and those which were only just derelict and in relatively good condition structurally) 102 Scottish castles have been identified which were brought back into use from being uninhabited and uninhabitable between 1945 and 2010. Of these, seventy-seven were restored by individuals and fifteen by corporate bodies. Most restored castles became

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<sup>305</sup> The cases of Portencross and Tioram are discussed in chapter four.

<sup>306</sup> Francis Bacon ‘Of Nobility’ **The Essays** (1623) In *Officina Ioannis Hauiland*, London

‘new’ buildings internally, with a level of comfort and luxury which sixteenth century builders could never have imagined. Central heating, electric lighting, modern kitchens and fully plumbed bathrooms were installed in the majority of restored castles, although some which were done early in the period or on a tight budget did not have central heating installed or had heating systems which rely on labour intensive wood-burning stoves (including Ravenstone, Cramond and Balbithan).

## LOCATION

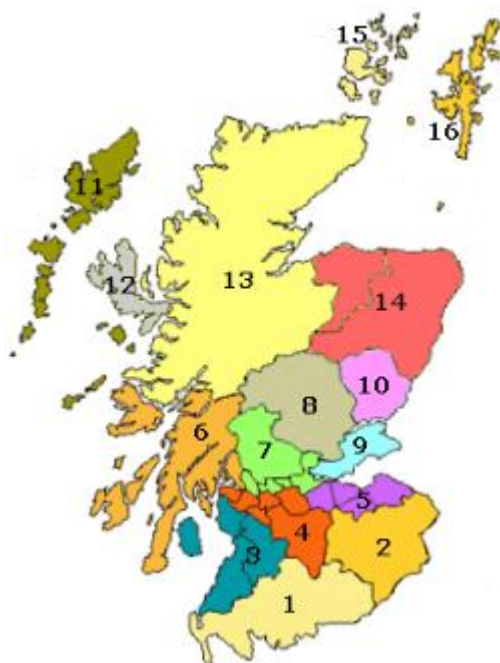


Table 7 Reoccupied castles by geographical location

Number key for map	No. of castles
1. Dumfries and Galloway	12
2. The Borders	7
3. Ayrshire & Isle of Arran	5
4. Glasgow & the Clyde Valley	7
5. Edinburgh & the Lothians	11
6. Argyll & Bute	6
7. Stirlingshire	7
8. Perth & Kinross	6
9. Fife	7
10. Angus & Dundee	8
11. Hebrides	1
12. Isle of Skye	0
13. Highlands	7
14. Grampian (Aberdeenshire & Moray)	18
15. Orkney Isles	0
16. Shetland Isles	0



FIGURE 36 DUNSKEY CASTLE, BOUGHT FOR RESTORATION IN 1998 BUT NEVER STARTED<sup>307</sup>

Across the country, Scotland's castles are clustered in certain geographic areas. As can be seen from table 1, the three main areas where castles have been restored are Aberdeen, Dumfries and Galloway and Edinburgh and the Lothians. The geographical spread of the restored castles in table 1 is roughly reflected in the spread of **all** castles throughout Scotland<sup>308</sup>, so it seems that there are no areas specially favoured by restorers. It is, of course, those buildings with 'scenic value' that are most attractive as potential homes to those with the desire to rebuild. Most buildings which have already been restored are attractive and well-situated, such as Abbot's Tower in Dumfriesshire, overlooking the romantic ruins of Sweetheart Abbey, or Ackergill Tower in Wick, situated on the Caithness coast. There is a trade-off between costs and scenic location; the more attractive the rural or seaside location and the larger the amount of land included, the higher the initial costs. A few castles, such as Newmilns Tower in Ayrshire, are situated on small plots of land in the centre of busy towns or housing estates or within industrial complexes. Some buyers paid low prices for buildings in crowded or unattractive areas – for example, Niddrie Castle near Edinburgh, which is next to a shale bing. Some of those which remain as potentially restorable ruins tend to have intractable problems of location – for example, Baltersan, which is close to the busy A77 trunk road, has only a tiny footprint of land and no access road, or Dunskey, which is situated on a dramatic cliff-top with no access for services, or Dunglass, which lies in the remains of an oil terminal.

<sup>307</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunskey\\_Castle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunskey_Castle) accessed October 2010

<sup>308</sup> **Collins Castles Map of Scotland** (1998) Harper Collins, London



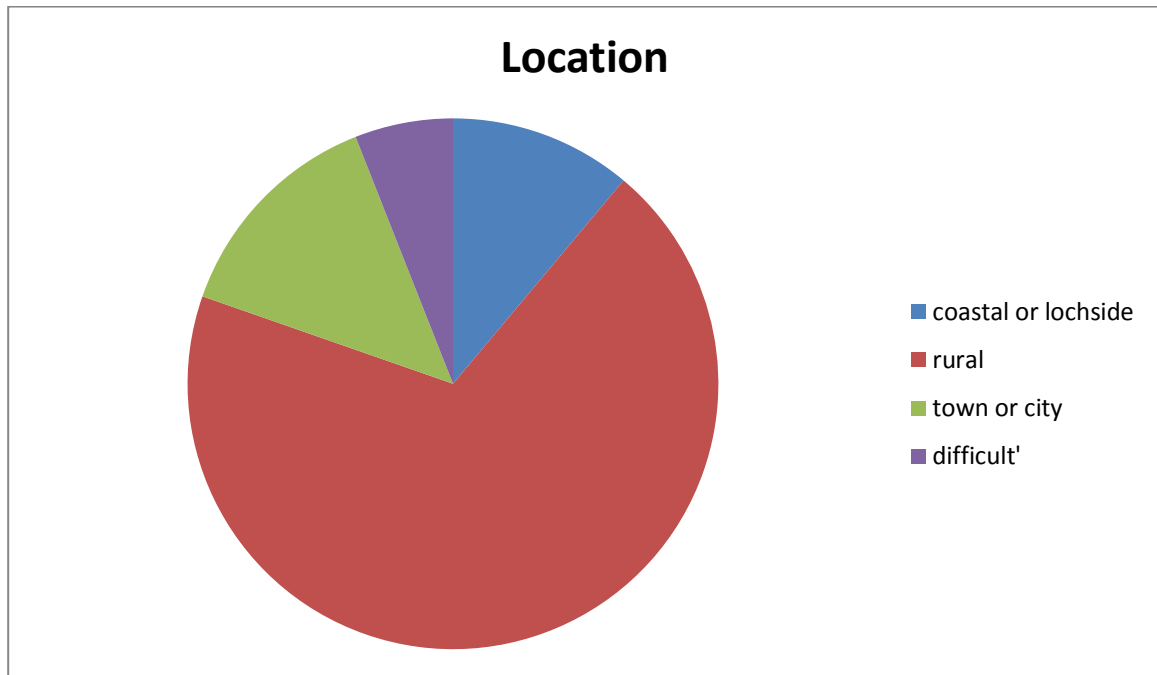


TABLE 8 LOCATIONS OF RESTORED CASTLES

By far the greatest proportion of restored castles is in rural locations, not surprisingly, since Scotland is a largely rural country. (N.B. there is some overlap; some castles are both coastal/lochside and rural.) Most rural locations are attractive, but some are more attractive than others - Tillycairn Castle, for example, which was restored 1979-81, is in a secluded area of rural Aberdeenshire, but accessed through a particularly ugly farmyard very close to the entrance. It was for sale from 2007 until 2009 and probably did not sell because of that. Access is one of the most awkward problems for any restoring owner, and Tilquhillie, Rusco, Abbot's Tower, Mains<sup>309</sup> and Barholm all had access difficulties to be sorted out before or during the restoration. Only six (Newmilns, Lochfoot, Breeze's Tower, Tillycairn, Blackhall and Niddrie,) of the restored castles are situated in 'difficult' areas. 'Difficult' is a subjective judgement, but if a castle has only a very small amount of ground and is hemmed in by modern buildings or farm outbuildings, or very close to a busy road or ugly industrial area, then it has been counted as 'difficult'. The fact that the majority of Scottish castles have scenic locations has doubtless been a contributing factor in their restorations. Their aesthetic attraction, both as romantic ruins and as occupied buildings in beautiful settings, is seductive.

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### AVAILABILITY & CONDITION

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Whether or not a building was bought for restoration depended in the first instance, of course, upon its availability. One source since 1990 is *The Buildings at Risk Register* which was set up in Scotland in response to concern at the growing number of listed buildings and buildings in

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<sup>309</sup> Chapters about the restorations of Tilquhillie, Rusco and Mains are contained in Clow (2000)



Conservation Areas that were vacant and had fallen into a state of disrepair. The Register is maintained by the Scottish Civic Trust on behalf of Historic Scotland, and provides information on properties of architectural or historic merit throughout the country that are considered to be at risk.<sup>310</sup> Before it existed, in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, would-be restorers relied on McGibbon and Ross, Nigel Tranter's five volumes and word of mouth among their small community. Tranter helped several owners to find buildings, including Ballencrieff, Fawside and Plane, as he saw it as a personal mission to help save ruinous fortalices from falling further into disrepair. Some restorers approached the owner of a potentially restorable castle with an offer to buy, and some were successful, if only after persistent enquiries (e.g. Fordyce, Kinkell, Kirkhope, Rusco, Tilquhillie). Graham Carson took a creatively proactive approach when he persuaded the Vaux family to sell Rusco Tower in 1972 by offering to give back the building for nothing if he had not completed the restoration by a specified date<sup>311</sup>. Gerald Laing told the story of his approach to Angus MacDonald, the farmer who owned Kinkell, and the difficult negotiations he went through – despite the farmer's friendliness and professed desire to sell – before purchasing at £5000, a price he found "rather steep for those days"<sup>312</sup>. He was lucky to reach agreement within one season. Many owners found the process of purchase to be protracted; often, the seller was a landowner whose family had owned the castle for several generations and who felt a wrench at letting it go (even if the pain was to be cushioned by the money received) and was unable to complete the sale without putting difficulties in the way of the purchaser. Peter Clarke pressed the Duke of Buccleuch for eighteen years before he agreed to sell Kirkhope Tower for restoration<sup>313</sup>; the Steels, on the other hand, reported a largely trouble-free acquisition of Aikwood Castle for restoration from the same seller, the Duke of Buccleuch, who was said to be enthusiastic about the restoration.<sup>314</sup> Since he sold both properties at about the same time, in the mid-1990s, some external factor was probably the reason, and it may be that the Steels were fortunate to be the right people in the right place at the right time, and also particularly favoured because David Steel was the local Liberal Party MP. Peter Hewkin spent two years trying to buy Craigrownie, firstly persuading the council to serve a repairs notice on the owners of the deteriorating building, then employing a private detective to trace the bankrupt owner's former wife, who was not aware she still retained an interest in the property.<sup>315</sup>

Despite the difficulties several new owners experienced, it is only because a large quantity of ruinous and derelict buildings was available and were eventually sold, that so many were rebuilt and reoccupied. Scotland had had a ready supply of ruinous but restorable castles for centuries; it was only in the second half of the twentieth century, however, that a large number of determined would-be restorers came along, eager to buy them from their erstwhile owners. The particular circumstances of the time and place were somehow right for the wave of restorations to take place.

<sup>310</sup> The Buildings at Risk website: <http://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/BAR/> accessed October 2010

<sup>311</sup> Graham Carson 'Rusco Tower – for owner occupation' in Clow, 162

<sup>312</sup> Gerald Laing **Kinkell. The Reconstruction of a Scottish Castle** (1974) Ardullie House, 85

<sup>313</sup> Jade Beecroft 'A Towering Success' **Daily Mail** June 29, 2005

<sup>314</sup> Judy Steel 'A Liberal Conversion of History' **The Times** November 7, 1992

<sup>315</sup> No byline 'From Crumbling Ruin to a Castle for Keeps' **Daily Telegraph** March 3, 2004

Paradoxically, those buildings which had been roofless shells for centuries – usually sixteenth century towers – were often easier and cheaper to resurrect, from a builder's point of view, than those recently occupied houses which had damp plaster, rotting window frames and floorboards and broken, rusting gutters, which had to be stripped out until the building became a shell . Duncraig and Glenapp Castles are examples of the latter, both being large, Victorian mansions. The majority of castles bought for restoration had been roofless and unoccupied for more than fifty years, some for centuries, such as Leslie Castle and Barholm.

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### SIZE & TYPE OF BUILDING

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The most significant feature of Scottish castles, in terms of their manageability as private restorations, is the domestic scale of so many of them, especially compared to the huge size of many European castles. This has doubtless been a major contributory factor in the post WW2 'renaissance'. The definitions used in this thesis are as follows:

A '**small**' house has up to five bedrooms and one or two public rooms, plus kitchen and bathroom(s), providing adequate accommodation for one family.

A '**medium**' house has ample accommodation for a large family, with between six and ten bedrooms and several public rooms (great hall, study, dining room, utility room, for example).

A '**large**' house is big enough for use as a hotel, with more than ten bedrooms and six or more public rooms.

N.B. these are not technical descriptions; they were found to be the most useful demarcations for the purposes of analyzing the data in this thesis.

The majority of buildings which were reoccupied were small (n=45) or medium (n=50) towers. This is not surprising, given the fact that the larger the building the greater the reconstruction and subsequent maintenance costs. For the most part, the size and number of rooms internally reflects the external size of the building, with a couple of exceptions. Liberton Tower and Niddrie Castle are both imposing fourteenth century buildings with massively thick walls; their internal accommodation is surprisingly meagre, given the external appearance, like a grapefruit with lots of pith and disappointingly little fruit. Some of the larger buildings present a great challenge because of the multiplicity of stages of construction (e.g. Ravenstone in Wigtownshire), the size of the external shell (e.g. Liberton Tower, Niddrie Castle), or the vast scale of the internal accommodation , such as Duncraig Castle in the Highlands, which is one of the case studies in chapter five, and Taymouth Castle in Perth and Kinross, which has been the subject of planned restoration schemes for a luxury hotel that have never yet materialized.<sup>316</sup> There is, though, a

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<sup>316</sup> David McKay 'Taymouth hotel bid back on the map after 5 years' **Aberdeen Press and Journal** February 21, 2011

snobbery about Victorian baronial mansions, which have been scorned by arbiters of 'good taste' and Modernists, at least until recently:

In the decades following the Second World War, Scots Baronial reached its nadir of esteem, being seen as mad, bad or simply tasteless. At that time it was often considered a mark of good taste to have demolished a house by David Bryce, the arch-Scots Baronialist of the High Victorian period. To many Modernists, Scots baronial seemed to embody the most extreme excesses of Victorian architecture. To others, it seemed immoral, irrelevantly linked to an obsolete class, architecturally nationalist rather than international, and apparently contributing nothing to the evolution of modernity.<sup>317</sup>



FIGURE 37 'SCOTTISH BARONIAL EXTERIOR' BY OSBERT LANCASTER<sup>318</sup>

The great majority of castles which have been restored and reoccupied in the period 1945 – 2010 are small to medium sized sixteenth century towers (some with later additions). Only three buildings date exclusively from the nineteenth century (Duncraig, Glenapp and Craigrownie). This is probably more to do with availability, costs and practicalities rather than aesthetics, however. Derelict Victorian mansions are usually too big to be conveniently used as a modern family home; the scale of work needed, if dry and/or wet rot is established in a huge building is beyond the

<sup>317</sup> Michael C. Davis **Scots Baronial. Mansions and Castle Restorations in the West of Scotland** (1996), Spindrift Publishing, Ardrishaig, frontispiece

<sup>318</sup> James Knox **Cartoons and Coronets. The Genius of Osbert Lancaster**, 125

capacity of most individuals. The rather tragic story of the Dobsons of Duncraig, a family who took on a 29 bedroom decaying castellated mansion in the Highlands and attempted to restore it as a home for the extended family, was told in a gripping BBC television series in 2004<sup>319</sup> and in the media thereafter. When the Dobsons sold up, at least partly defeated by the scale of the building, they made a financial profit, but it could be argued that they also paid a high price in the fracturing and severing of close family relationships, and the intrusively intimate public portrayal by the media.<sup>320</sup> Ecclesgreig in Aberdeenshire and Balintore in Angus are two other very large castellated mansions whose owners have plans to restore them, but face a daunting task. Classification of the original date of the buildings is very difficult, as so many castles have been altered and added to over centuries of rebuilding. Some buildings are very complex, for example Ravenstone Castle in Wigtownshire, or Kenmure Castle in Galloway. The reason that many of the restored ones are 'straightforward' in architectural terms is that they were abandoned by their owners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as being too small, too old-fashioned and too inconvenient for modern living at the time. Examples of the long-abandoned and ruined sixteenth century towers which were restored in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are Barholm and Tilquhillie.



FIGURE 38 KENMURE CASTLE, GALLOWAY – TOO COMPLEX (& BIG) TO RESTORE?<sup>321</sup>

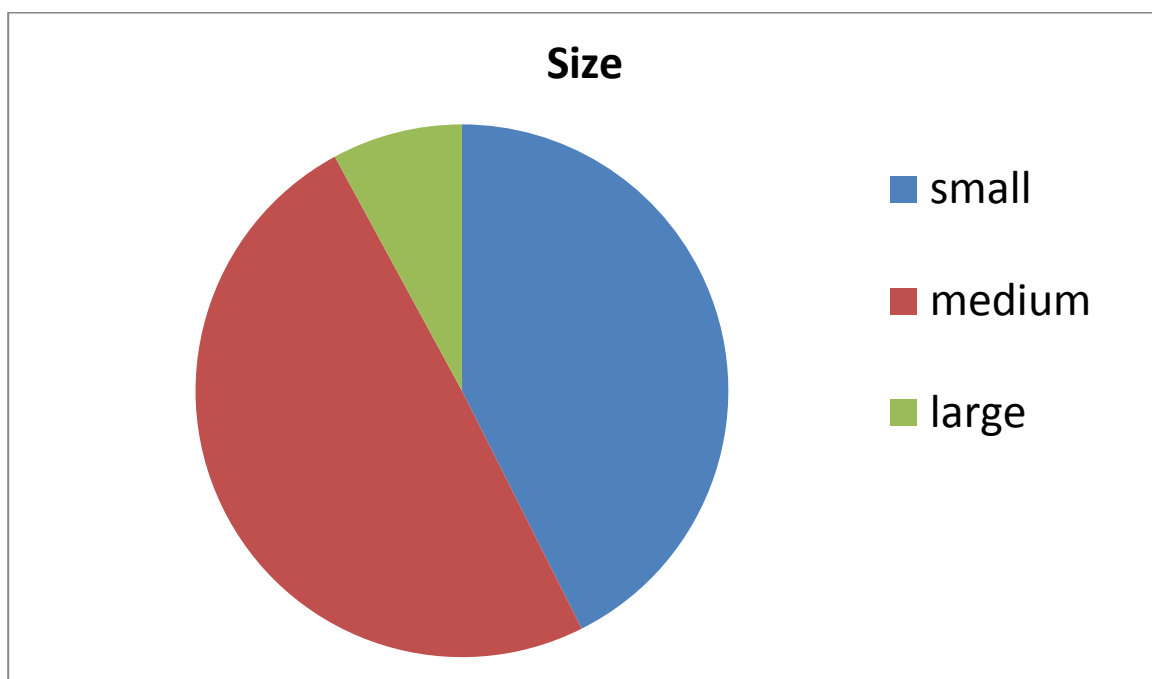
<sup>319</sup> BBC1 **The Dobsons of Duncraig** (six part series) (October 2004) partly available online at <http://www.indimage.com/> accessed June 2011

<sup>320</sup> Anna Burnside 'Not Much left of the Dobsons of Duncraig' **The Sunday Times** October 29, 2006

<sup>321</sup> Author

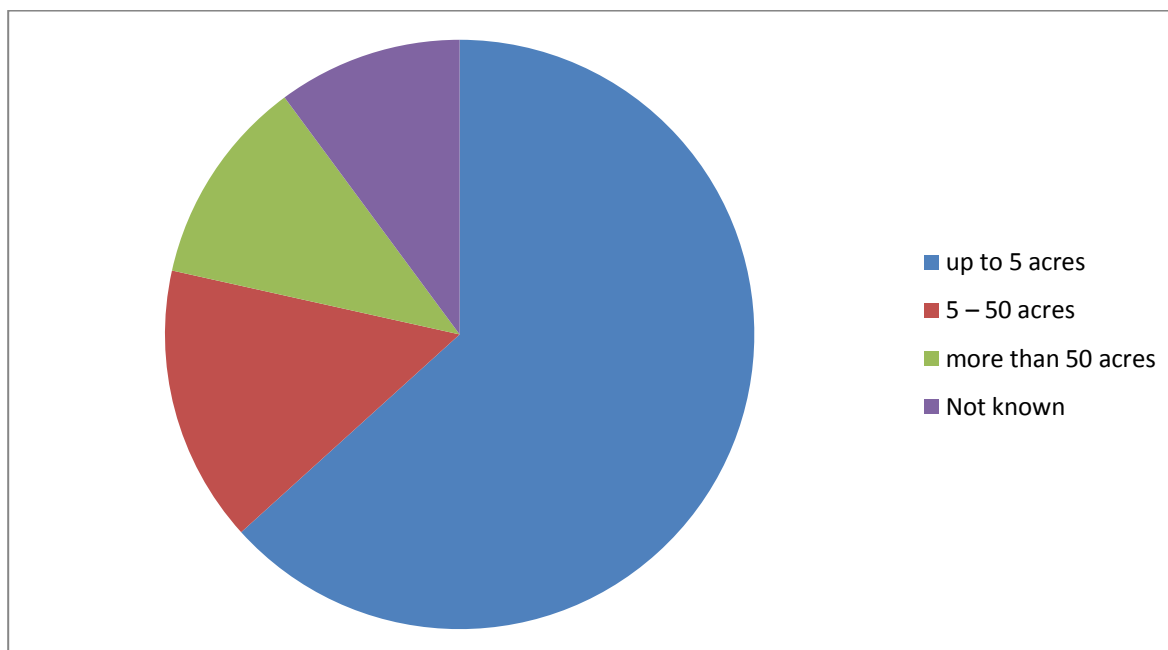


FIGURE 39 TAYMOUTH CASTLE - TOO BIG (& COMPLEX) TO RESTORE?<sup>322</sup>



**Table 9 Size of buildings restored**

<sup>322</sup> [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Taymouth\\_Castle.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Taymouth_Castle.jpg) accessed March 2011



**Table 10 Amount of land purchased with ruinous castles**

Most buildings (n=50), as can be seen from table 10, were sold with large gardens of up to five acres, rather than policies or estates. Of these, a large majority (37) was sold with between one and five acres, while 13 had less than one acre. Only one - Fordell - of the nine castles which was sold with more than fifty acres of land was restored solely or primarily as a family home. The rest were used as the holiday homes of wealthy owners (Balmuto, Barscobe, Castle of Mey, Harthill) for building development (Sundrum), or they incorporated businesses (Breachacha, Comlongon and Midmar). The amount of land sold with a ruined castle did not usually represent the estate in which the building would once have been situated, but often seemed to be the smallest amount which the seller could reasonably offer. Farmers and landowners, who represent most of the sellers, do not give up land lightly. Several of the new owners subsequently sought to buy more land to surround their castle – see further details in chapter four.

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### END USE

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Of the one hundred and two castles restored, seventy-seven were bought by new individual owners, mostly for the purpose of living in as a family home. Eight were restored by 'old' owners who had held the property in their families for some time, often many generations. Twenty-one were used for commercial purposes after restoration, some in order to help finance the work. Not all were inhabited full time; some were let out intermittently to holidaymakers and some became meeting places for clan societies, etc., or opened to the public as museums. A couple were bought for multiple occupancy, four were bought for the owners to use as a holiday home, one was bought to use as architects' offices (Rossend), one as a clan centre, three were bought by builders

speculatively, and twenty were bought to use commercially (e.g. Ackergill, Liberton Tower, Comlongon), with only just over half of all restorations purchased by an individual family for them to live in as their main home, despite the rather uncompromising nature of the buildings. In Charles McKean's analysis of the ways in which Scottish Renaissance country owners threw off the straitjacket of 'pure form', he pointed out that 'we developed into, and remained, *a nation of adaptors*.'<sup>323</sup> The same might be said of modern day restorers.

The uses to which the restored castles were put often further changed over time, as the owners' life circumstances changed or as the owners themselves changed. Ballencrieff started off as a wedding venue and bed and breakfast establishment, but the owners stopped these commercial ventures after some time, presumably as their financial situation improved. Forter was used by the Pooley family as a holiday home after its rebuilding in 1990, but in 2003 Robert Pooley, together with his interior designer daughter, Katherine, refurbished the castle and opened it as an upmarket holiday rental property. Aikwood, which had been home to Lord and Lady Steel since 1992, was given in 2010 to their son Rory Steel, who refurbished and opened the tower for holiday accommodation in Spring 2011.<sup>324</sup> Eventual end use may not even have been decided in some projects. At the start of the rebuilding of his castle in Spain, Matthew Parris was not clear about what he would use it for:

Strange to report, we hardly discussed what we would do with the house once we had restored it. That was never a big part of those early conversations. We thought, I suppose (as far as we thought at all) that what l'Avenc would be for would somehow just emerge.<sup>325</sup>

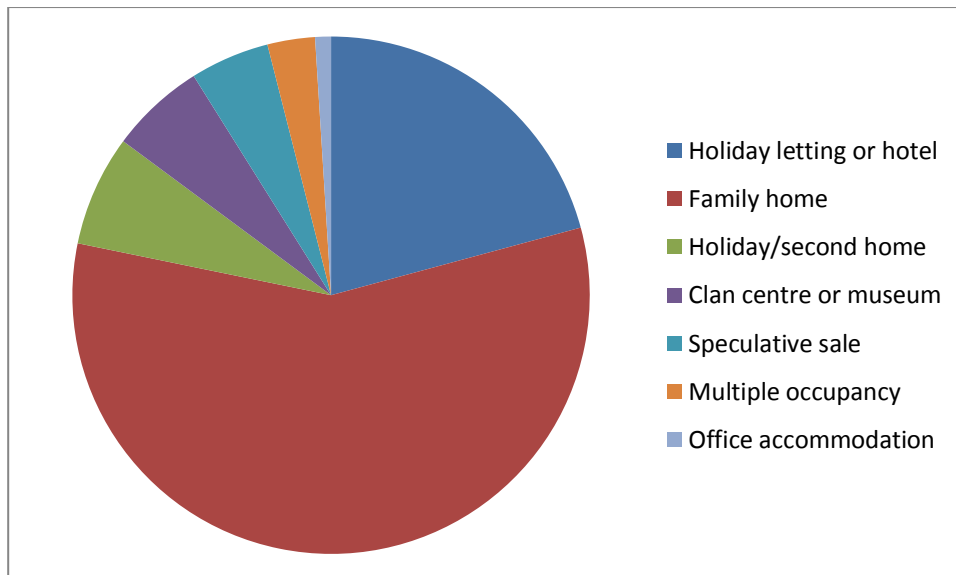


TABLE 11 INITIAL END USE OF RESTORATIONS

<sup>323</sup> McKean, *Scottish Chateau*, 15

<sup>324</sup> <http://www.aikwoodtower.com/> accessed March 2011

<sup>325</sup> Parris *A Castle in Spain*, 19

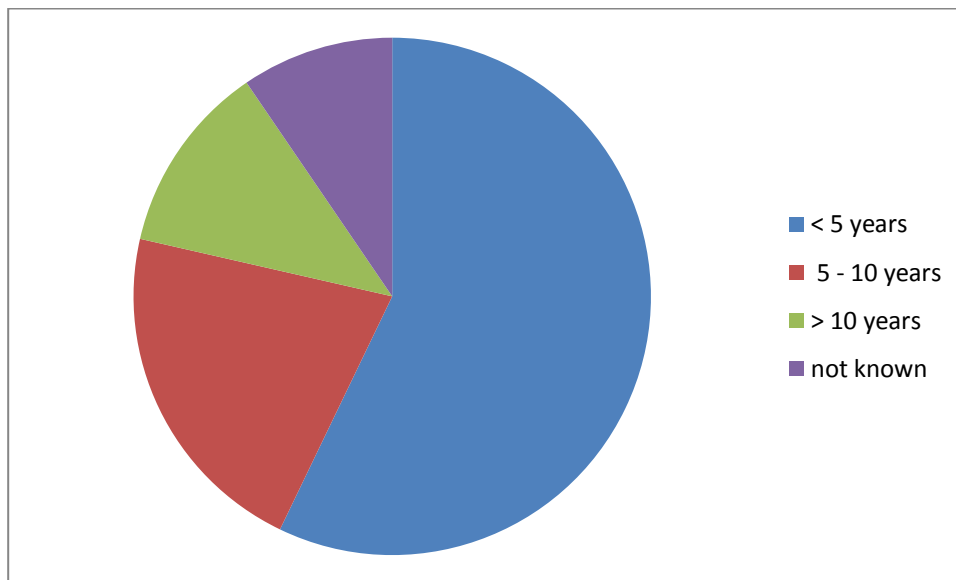
As can be seen from table 11, only just over half of all the buildings were restored as family homes, but the majority offered living accommodation, even if only for holidays. The very wealthy restorers, such as the Queen Mother, could afford to keep their restored towers and castles for personal holiday use; others, such as the Stuarts of Castle Stuart, opened their doors to paying guests to support the building's upkeep.

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### TIME TAKEN TO REBUILD

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Assessment of how long each castle restoration lasted is problematic, as many were seen as ongoing projects and some were never finished, even many years after the restoration started. The question of where to measure the end is tricky. There was at least an element of do-it-yourself in many of the rebuilding projects, ranging from massively ambitious one man jack of all trade owners, such as the sculptor Gerald Laing at Kinkell Castle, who finished and moved in after rebuilding in less than one year (with help from a local workforce), to those who liked to drop in and give a hand to the builders, or supervise them now and then. Marc Ellington, restoring owner of Towie Barclay in Aberdeenshire and member of the Historic Buildings Council, approved of the 'hands on' approach: "many recent restorations have been almost entirely controlled and directed by the owners themselves using their architects and professional advisers principally for the purpose of providing working drawings and communicating with relevant public authorities. This degree of personal involvement and commitment by owners has contributed greatly to their restorations' success and individuality."<sup>326</sup>



**Table 12 Length of time taken to complete rebuilding (individually owned castles), excluding time taken waiting to receive planning permissions, etc.**

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<sup>326</sup> Marc Ellington 'Tower House Restoration in Scotland' in Smith, J S (ed) **North East Castles. Castles in the Landscape of North East Scotland** (1990) Aberdeen University Press, Worcester, 80



As can be seen from table 12, the majority of restorations took less than five years to complete, and only a few took more than ten years. The lengthy restorations were mostly DIY projects, where a new owner had plenty of time and relatively little money, such as Balgonie. Of those which are ‘not known’ the majority probably took less than five years, but there is not enough direct evidence to complete the statistics.

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## SECTION 2 – THE OWNERS

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Anyone who rebuilds a castle is automatically deemed to be either an American, an aristocrat, a businessman, a property speculator, or, at the very least, a Tory.<sup>327</sup>

Laing’s castle rebuilding stereotypes are represented in reality. American restorers and aristocrats together make up a small minority (three Americans and eight aristocrats). Businessmen (and also businesswomen, but not many of them) and property speculators or developers are a much larger group, and Tories are doubtless also well represented. Nicholas Fairbairn, who restored Fordell Castle, was a Tory MP, as was Peter Clarke of Kirkhope, and Helen Bailey of Borthwick Tower had been a Tory candidate (as well as a businesswoman) and was an admirer of Margaret Thatcher. The question of who else became a castle restorer is addressed in this section; the restoring owners are divided into three types – ‘new’ owners, ‘old’ owners and corporate owners.

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### THE ‘NEW’ OWNERS

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“The castles of Scotland, especially those that are smaller, have exercised a phenomenal attraction to many couples (usually young and not very rich) in the thirty years or so between 1960 and 1990. ....Whatever caused such extraordinary interest and affection to persuade these individuals, and many others, to mortgage themselves far beyond prudence, committing themselves and their young families to years of rebuilding, with little to guide them other than the buildings themselves?”<sup>328</sup>

Who were the castle owners who purchased a ruin in order to restore it? The 77 ‘new’ owners were those individuals and couples who bought a castle building specifically in order to restore it. ‘New’ is in inverted commas here to emphasize the newness of most owners in terms of their connection to the landowning classes. There is, of course, no single, simple answer to the question of who they were. The purchasers were as varied as the buildings they bought to restore. Yet, as with the buildings, it is possible to discern categories and patterns. Six discrete, but not mutually exclusive, groups have been identified which cover all of the new owners and make distinctions which are meaningful in terms of their differing approaches to rebuilding and reoccupation:

- a. The ‘family heritage’ restorers

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<sup>327</sup> Gerald Laing, **Kinkell**, 95

<sup>328</sup> W.A. Brogden, Foreword, in Clow (ed.) **Restoring Scotland’s Castles** (2000). Brogden’s rhetorical question struck me with some force when I first read the book, as I had been half of a not very rich young(ish) couple with a young child in 1996, when we first saw Barholm Castle for sale.

- b. The wealthy (holiday) home buyers
- c. The middle class professionals
- d. The architects
- e. The 'dreamers' without enough resources to finish the job
- f. The entrepreneurs/property speculators

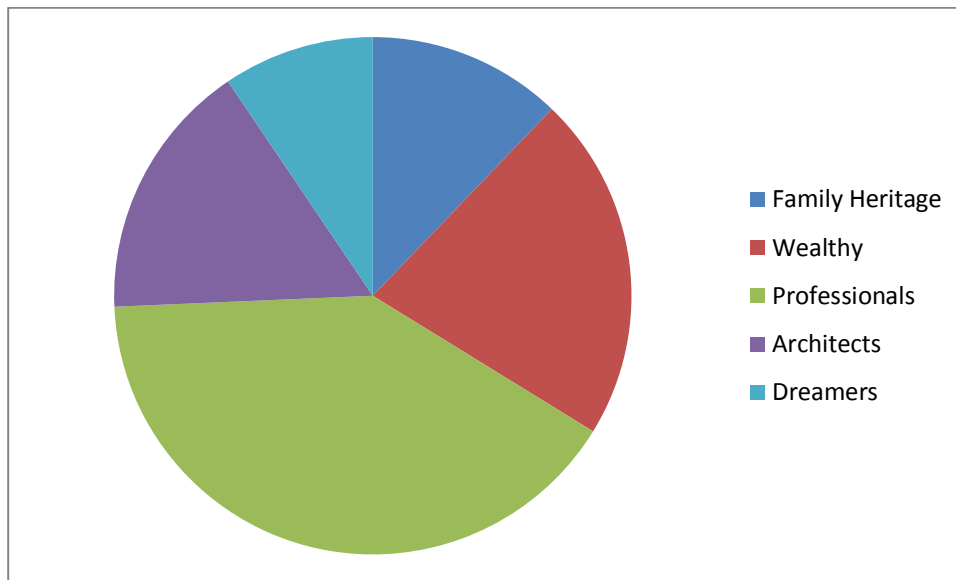


TABLE 13 PROPORTIONS OF NEW OWNER 'TYPES'

### The 'family heritage' restorers

The first group of eleven 'family heritage restorers' comprises those who were buying back the family estate – or were buying a castle with the same name as their family name. For them, there was a sense of mission bound up with identity, sometimes at the level of family and sometimes at the level of clan. Lineage is an important concept to the members of this group. Their financial resources varied, but most put in physical work on their building, presumably to 'cement' their relationship with it in a very personal way; most also acted as their own master of works, supervising the project. They are: Major Nicholas McLean-Bristol - Breachacha; Robert Lister Macneil - Kisimul; Graham Carson - Rusco; Charles Stuart - Castle Stuart (rented); David Leslie - Castle Leslie; David Lumsden - Tillycairn; Major Roy Armstrong-Wilson - Gilnockie (aka Hollows Tower); Roderick Oliphant - Hatton; Lt. Col. D. R. Stewart Allward – Castle Stalker; Harry Boswell – Balmuto; the Earl of Perth - Stobhall. Autobiographical narratives of the first three in the list are expanded in chapter four. In addition to these individual purchasers, the Menzies Clan Society bought Castle Menzies in 1957.

### The wealthy restorers

The second group, the sixteen wealthy restorers who purchased a ruined castle to restore for a second or holiday home, consisted of those, such as the Queen Mother, who could readily afford to have the work carried out by a professional team of architects and builders and who mostly paid them to get on with the job, rather than becoming deeply and directly involved in the work themselves. It is this factor which distinguishes the 'wealthy restorers' from the other groups, except for the entrepreneurs and speculators. Nonetheless, the new wealthy owners had all chosen a very special, historically significant building in need of much work beyond mere 'renovating' and were surely committed to its rescue and seeing it transformed. The Queen Mother was one of the first individual owners to restore a ruined castle after WW2, and may even have helped to set the trend, in the way that Queen Victoria stoked interest in Highland castles at the end of the nineteenth century. The often-repeated story of her decision to rescue the castle may be apocryphal but has a ring of truth : "Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother first saw what was then Barrogill Castle in 1952, while mourning the death of her husband, King George VI. Falling for its ruined isolated charm, and hearing it was to be abandoned, she declared: "Never! It's part of Scotland's heritage. I'll save it" <sup>329</sup> On the BBC website, the area's MP, Viscount Thurso, expands on the story:

She saw this building and, curious, she came down the drive and found it with the family in one room and, I think, the sheep in the other room," he said. "She fell in love with it. It is the most beautiful, pretty small castle, very typical of what we had around Caithness in days gone by. "She determined to rescue it, which she did." The castle was in need of major repair work after 120mph gales had lifted its lead roof and rolled it up "like a can". <sup>330</sup>

The Queen Mother was reported on the BBC website to have regularly travelled north to supervise the work, eventually moving in and restoring the ancient name, the Castle of Mey. She is also reported to have been heavily involved in the restoration of the castle gardens. Sir Hugh Wontner, hotelier and Lord Mayor of London, took no physical part in the restoration of Barscobe, but every year he would take a paintbrush and ceremoniously repaint the armorial arms above the front door, <sup>331</sup> indicating an urge for some 'hands on' involvement with the building, if only at a symbolic level. For the most part, the wealthy owners did not write narratives of their restorations, with the exception of Nicholas Fairbairn (see chapter five on Fordell) nor did they give interviews to the media about their castles, with the exception of Baron Twynneham of Knockbren - the latter spoke to a newspaper property supplement when the castle was for sale, possibly on the advice of the selling agent. Wealthy people tend to keep their affairs private; the details of their motivations to rebuild and the processes which they went through to do so are not much available in the public domain. The second restorer of Law Castle (the first had the building repossessed before finishing), the entrepreneur David Hutton, did give an interview to the

<sup>329</sup> <http://www.castleofmey.org.uk/castleofmeyhistory.cfm?PageID=8> accessed September 2008; text no longer available November 2010

<sup>330</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/scotland/1905006.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/1905006.stm) accessed December 2010

<sup>331</sup> Anecdote told to me by Sir Hugh Wontner's grandson, Alastair Emery, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010

*Observer* newspaper: “The restoration wasn't too stressful - it was good fun. Fortunately, I'm in a position where money isn't a problem, and profit wasn't a goal. I think you have to have that point of view if you try to plan such a big, unpredictable project.”<sup>332</sup> Robert Pooley of Forter Castle is reported to have spent one million pounds in 1990<sup>333</sup>, approximately equivalent to two million pounds in 2011, restoring Forter Castle, a small sixteenth century tower, from a ruinous state.



FIGURE 40 ARMORIAL PANEL ABOVE THE DOOR OF BARSCOBIE CASTLE<sup>334</sup>

### The middle class professionals

The ‘middle class professionals’ is the largest of the six groups, the owners representing a wide range of professions (see table 14), levels of income and degrees of knowledge and understanding about historic buildings. All were castle enthusiasts and many could be described a ‘hobby restorers’. Most had enough resources to employ an architect and at least some professional help, although several were, in Brogden’s words, “young and not very rich”. The majority (29 out of the 30, the exception being Barholm), rich or not, were directly involved in the rebuilding, motivated mainly by a sense of adventure and fun and a desire to ‘rescue’ a building in distress; motivations are addressed in greater depth in the case studies in chapter five. All of the restorers had to employ tradesmen and labourers to help out to a greater or lesser extent, but some, like Gerald Laing at Kinkell, worked alongside their workforce throughout the rebuilding. Other new owners, with jobs and commitments that prevented them working full time on their restorations, nevertheless acted as their own project managers and directed the work; among these, most, like Judy and David Steel, participated in at least some of the unskilled building tasks. “There’s something about smacking your own thumb now and again, shedding blood on your own roof,

<sup>332</sup> Ben West ‘High cost of holding the fort: Upkeep on a castle is hard on the purse but brings its own rewards’ **The Observer**, December 11, 2005, 13

<sup>333</sup> ‘Scottish Castle Seeks Laird’ 15 February 2007

<http://www.findaproproperty.com/displaystory.aspx?edid=00&salerent=0&storyid=10619> accessed December 2010

<sup>334</sup> Author

that gives you perspective and shapes a desire for perfection. Doing for yourself also arms you for encounters with other builders less careful or scrupulous.”<sup>335</sup>

### The architects

Twelve of the castles were bought and restored by architects, who are also ‘middle class professionals’, but because of the nature of their particular interest and expertise in buildings have been given a separate category. They, naturally, all acted as their own project managers. Lachlan Stewart of Ballone expressed the advantages and disadvantages in an interview: "Because I am an architect, I know how to save money! I have done all the design work myself, and we have used local saw mills. The downside is that it has taken us five years to do what someone else could do in one,"<sup>336</sup> Nicholas Groves-Raines bought and restored three ruinous castles/laird's houses: Edinample, Peffermill and Liberton House. Kit Martin, whose work is further described in chapter two, under the role of the campaigners, also converted three castles: Formakin, Keith Hall and Cullen. Keith Hall and Cullen are grand houses, which he converted into large apartments. Formakin, a twentieth century Lorimer ‘fake’ tower, is the only one which has been counted in the statistics, as the first two were not derelict when converted. Kit Martin bought speculatively in order to develop the properties and sell them on, while Nicholas Groves Raines lived and worked in his properties before moving on to the next one. The other ten architects all lived in their restored castles, at least for some time. As conservationists, they were unusual members of their profession, at a time when Modernist ideas prevailed and architects were trained in designing new buildings rather than rescuing historic ones. Two of the architects also fall into the first group, of family heritage restorers – Robert Lister Macneil (Kisimul) and David Leslie (Leslie Castle).

### The unmonied dreamers

Most – perhaps all – restoring owners could be described as ‘dreamers’, and some struggled financially with their projects, but the ‘unmonied dreamers’ are few in number among the finished projects, because members of this category tended not to get far with the work; building work requires large sums of capital and a reasonable cash flow. The seven counted in this category are those who started the building work and managed to get the building at least partly habitable before most of them were forced to give up. They are the sometime owners of Fawside, Hatton, Law, Balgonie, Niddrie, Duncraig, and Ravenstone. The first four had the almost finished buildings repossessed by the lenders when they ran out of money. Balgonie is still inhabited by the second restorers, and although it is run as a business (weddings, corporate events and guided tours), it is not finished and the proceeds are used to continue the building work. Niddrie is also still inhabited by the second restorers, who are continuing to work on the rebuilding. Ravenstone was sold on in 2001 to another couple of restorers, who are still, in 2011, working on the restoration as a DIY project. Duncraig was bought by members of an extended family, who all

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<sup>335</sup> James Charles Roy **The Fields of Atherny**, 125 -6

<sup>336</sup> Isabel Oakeshott ‘A Scotswoman's Home Is Her Castle’ 19 May 1998 **Evening News (Edinburgh)**

eventually gave up and left, apart from the original couple, Perle and Sam Dobson, whose idea it was to buy the property; they eventually sold before the work was finished in 2009. Theirs was the grandest dream, of restoring an 89 room decaying Victorian mansion, from the very humblest of beginnings, with no kind of cultural connection:

“‘I’d never been to Scotland before, but when we all came up to view the house, we just fell in love with the place.’ Perlin’s parents came to the UK from Jamaica in the 1960s, and her father died when she was young. Raised by a single mother with four siblings, she did not have her own bedroom until she was 16. ‘I dreamed of space,’ she says.”<sup>337</sup>

Altogether, fourteen would-be restoring owners sold on, or had the castle re-possessed before they finished (or in some cases, before starting); some of these are described in chapter four, in the section on failed projects. For a full list, see table 18. Castle restoration is a costly and complex business and it is hardly surprising that some owners do not manage to finish their projects.

### Entrepreneurs and speculators

The entrepreneurs and speculators are those who made money from the buildings which they restored, either by selling them on, by building and developing property in the castle grounds or by running a business which capitalized on the castle’s status and/or position. Ackergill, Broomhall, Borthwick, Comlongon and Duncraig are all large buildings and were all turned into hotels or upmarket catered accommodation by their new restoring owners. Mary McMurtrie’s nursery garden and the Whartons’ deer farm were set up in the grounds of Balbithan and Midmar respectively. New housing, or ‘enabling development’ was built in the grounds of Gogar and Sundrum and sold on by the builder owners, and Spedlins was sold on in a not quite finished state.<sup>338</sup> Several of these owners might also merit a place in the ‘wealthy owners’ category. Fenton was also restored as upmarket catered accommodation by Ian Simpson, the farmer owner who inherited the ruined tower, but it was not bought by a ‘new’ owner. Many owners could be placed in two or more of the above categories, but each has been assigned to the one which seemed to represent the defining status. There are other ways in which the restorers could be classified: by profession (and by implication, by social class and/or level of education), by nationality – i.e. Scottish/British or not – and by gender, and these are explored further in this chapter.

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<sup>337</sup> Diana Appleyard ‘Will the last laird please stand up?’ 20 January 2007, **The Daily Mail**

<sup>338</sup> Personal communication from the owner by e-mail 16 March 2008

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PROFESSIONS

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Categories of owner	N
Artists (including celebrities / media people)	7
Entrepreneurs / business people	16
Professional connections with building (mostly architects)	16
Other professions (e.g. law, teaching, banking)	16
Politicians	4
Farmers	2
Property developers	7
Other (publisher, leather worker, aristocrat and writer)	4
Not known	11

**Table 14 Occupations of individual purchasing owners (N.B. there is some overlap, as both individuals and couples may fall into more than one category)**

It can be seen from the table above that the three biggest categories of restorers are business people (nearly all businessmen), architects and professionally qualified people. ‘Businessman’ is a blanket term that covers a multitude of types, from struggling smalltime entrepreneurs to wealthy owners of international businesses. While it is impossible to know each individual’s financial situation, narrative sources indicate that about half of the sixteen were not particularly wealthy (or did not perceive themselves to be so) and some found the restoration of their castle a considerable drain on their limited resources. Helen Bailey, for example, narrowly avoided bankruptcy while restoring Borthwick Castle and Roderick Oliphant drove taxis in order to help pay for the restoration of Hatton Castle but, even so, was eventually forced to sell up before the restoration was completed. The (presumably) wealthier businessmen commissioned firms of architects and builders to do a thorough and expensive job for them, such as Ric Wharton at Midmar and John Banister at Ackergill.

The ‘other professions’ represent law, teaching, the Army, social work, engineering, the civil service, accountancy, the ministry and the diplomatic service – a mixed bag of middle class jobs. Artists (including musicians), politicians and farmers are also represented – one of the latter, Ian Simpson, had a ruin on his land (Fenton Tower) and instead of selling it, as many farmers did, he restored it with a business partner and marketed it as a luxury rental property<sup>339</sup>. However, there seems to be no discernible pattern to the wide range of types of owner who were not architects,

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<sup>339</sup> <http://www.fentontower.co.uk/> accessed September 2010

property developers or entrepreneurs, beyond the fact that the great majority were middle class professionals.

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## NATIONALITY

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Another category which exercises debate is the nationality of the purchasers. George Rosie, in the title of an article in the *New Statesman* in 1999, asked *Who are the lairds lording over us?* : “over the past 40 or so years huge tracts of Scotland have fallen into the hands of the folk the 1870 act describes as “aliens”: Dutch, Germans, Danes, Americans, Hong Kong Chinese, Saudis and gents from the United Arab Emirates.”<sup>340</sup> This view was echoed by Tom Devine a year later: “Merchant bankers, stockbrokers, captains of industry, pop stars, oil-rich Arabs and wealthy purchasers from Holland and Denmark are among the groups that have acquired Scottish estates in the past few decades.”<sup>341</sup> But Devine pointed out that, despite what he called the ‘infiltration of newcomers’, “the continuities are deeply significant, as a core of fewer than 1,500 private estates have owned most of the land in Scotland during the last nine centuries.” There is a popular and rather jingoistic perception that Scotland’s castles, among other parts of the national heritage, are being taken over by ‘outsiders’ or foreigners. In an article in *The Sun* in 2008, sub headed *World's super-rich buy up Scotland*, details were given of ten non-Scots landowners with a combined wealth of 33 billion pounds, who own Scottish estates with a total area of 311,965 acres. Four of these contain an already existing Victorian castle (Skibo, Findylate, Balnagown and Aberuchill) and two owners have built new castles. Drew Oswald of estate agents Knight Frank was quoted as saying: “There are still a lot of people out there with plenty of money to spare. Scotland is seen as a quality destination. It's very private and the super rich can still go about their business without causing much of a stir.”<sup>342</sup> In these terms, the new owner restorers of Scottish castles are very small fry indeed. The majority purchased their castle with only a small footprint of land, mainly a large garden, and paid little more than the price of an ordinary detached family home. Despite buying into the castle-owning classes, they did not become landowners.

In the early 1990s, two blatantly xenophobic anti-English groups sprang up in Scotland: *Settler Watch* and *Scottish Watch*. Their aim was to drive English incomers out of Scotland.

The Watch factions claim that Scottish cultural identity is threatened by a swamping tide of English immigration, and that - especially in the north-east, centre of the North Sea oil industry - the wealth of the incomers is denying houses to Scottish families. There has been ominous talk about a land ‘suppurating with Sassenachs’, and about the Welsh precedent for burning holiday homes. Iain Sutherland, of Scottish Watch, writes about ‘cheque- book clearances’ and blames the English for ‘ethnic cleansing in Scotland in a civilised way’.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> George Rosie ‘Who are the lairds lording over us?’ **New Statesman** 13 December 1999

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid*, 456

<sup>342</sup> Matt Bendoris ‘Sold to the foreigners with £33bn to burn’ **The Sun** November 11 2008

<sup>343</sup> Neal Ascherson ‘The Warnings that Scotland’s Patient Nationalism Could Turn Nasty’ **The Independent** November 21, 1993



Fortunately, these organisations appear to have died out and the anti-English rhetoric they generated has abated.<sup>344</sup> However, Raymond Morris, an Englishman who has been restoring Balgonie Castle since 1985, found slogans about 'English lairds' daubed as graffiti on the castle walls.<sup>345</sup> Another Englishman who has restored two Scottish castles and lives in an English one which he restored after buying it in 1966 (Howgill Castle in Cumbria), is an elderly farmer, Tom Clarke.

Eventually in 1988 I bought the ruined 16<sup>th</sup> century Z plan Kilmartin Castle in Argyll. My son in law when seeing the ruin asked "Is the man deranged?" There was a lot of work to be done including removing the trees growing inside. I was ably helped in the consolidation and restoration task by my wife Olive, so that by 1995 we had the roof on. We think that now it is near original. Whilst we were awaiting planning permission to restore Kilmartin I bought a dilapidated Tower House in the borders called Lochhouse Tower. I was rather discouraged when a near relation asked "Tom why do you have to buy these old places?" However the former 16<sup>th</sup> century stronghold of the Johnstones is now a comfortable dwelling.<sup>346</sup>

The perception of the restorer as 'deranged' or mad is not uncommon, and emerges as a theme when individual narratives are inspected (see chapter four).

It is, in any case, impossible to categorise people neatly by nationality or country of origin, since so many have mixed backgrounds and have moved between countries for generations and many marriages and partnerships – and thus owners – represent two or more nationalities. However, a crude analysis of the restoring owners shows that only a handful are not British, and only a few have moved from England to Scotland to restore and live in their castle. Knight Frank real estate agents gave some sales figures in 2002: "It's interesting to note that our records show 49% of all properties - including castles - go to people within Scotland, 43% to people from England, 1.5% to Europeans and 6.5% from the rest of the world."<sup>347</sup> In terms of castles purchased for restoration which form the basis of this research, it is estimated that the 'rest of the world' and European figures are about equivalent to the Knight Frank figures and together make up only a small minority, but that in terms of British purchasers, there are significantly more from within Scotland than from England. Neither set of figures can be taken as reliable, however, since the categorization of nationality is so difficult and complex.

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## GENDER

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Also of interest as a characteristic is gender. Only four women have been the sole purchasers and restorers of castles – the Queen Mother (Castle of Mey), Helen Bailey (Borthwick), Alexa Scott-Plummer (Lanton) and Mary McMurtrie (Balbithan); additionally, Gillian Strickland won Powrie

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<sup>344</sup> Richard Johnson 'Passport to Padstow' **The Times** April 13, 2008

<sup>345</sup> Harry Conroy 'Part of the Nation's Fabric' **The Herald** 15 September 1994

<sup>346</sup> [http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/rec-id-36-cat\\_id-1-highlight-2-words.htm](http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/rec-id-36-cat_id-1-highlight-2-words.htm) accessed November 2010

<sup>347</sup> Frank Hurley 'Castle Market Takes a Battering' March 24, 2002 **Scotland on Sunday**, 26

Castle in a competition run by The National Trust for Scotland, by suggesting the best plan for its future. She had just married Peter Clarke, so they restored part of the castle as a couple. Indeed, the majority of purchasers are married couples, although the narratives have almost exclusively been told by the husbands, with wives cast in a supporting role, as in Tom Clarke's story, above. The only exceptions are Judy Steel (Aikwood) and Judy Corbett, who restored Gwydir Castle in Wales with her husband. An extract from Graham Carson's account of the restoration of Rusco Castle indicates the position accorded to the wife in one of the restoration projects. Telling of interviewing an architect he wrote: "We appeared to get on well at the first meeting. He did however say, "Where's your wife?" to which I replied, "Oh she'll be at home doing the dishes and things like that.""<sup>348</sup> Yeats' wife was given no credit for her part in the restoration of Thoor Ballylee (see chapter two); in his poem he claimed that he 'restored the tower for my wife George'. "But the poem's truth conceals another, and different truth - that they worked together at the restoration, and it was largely her vision and hands that created a dwelling from the former ruins."<sup>349</sup>

Although women do not feature prominently in the Scottish castle restoration literature and narratives, several independently wealthy women have 'saved' Scottish castles in various ways. In the 1950s Margaret Udney-Hamilton demolished the Victorian baronial extension at Udney Castle and carried out renovation work on the original tower. Margaret Sempill-Forbes bought back Druminnor or Forbes Castle in the late 1950s and executed a similar project there. Hope MacDougall, owner of Gylen Castle, commissioned architect Martin Hadlington to consolidate the ruin in the 1990s (backed by a generous grant from Historic Scotland and funds raised by clan members).<sup>350</sup> In 1989-90 Alexa Scott-Plummer, with architect Philip Mercer, radically changed and renovated Lanton Tower in the Borders, and then in the early 1990s spent six years repairing and renovating Cowdenknowes House, which incorporates a sixteenth century tower, with Andrew Davey of Simpson and Brown architects. The wealthy 'Stagecoach' transport entrepreneur Ann Gloag bought two large Scottish nineteenth century castles: Beaufort in 1994, which was sold to help pay off Lord Lovat's inheritance tax, and Kinfauns in 2004.

The gender of those who write about their restorations is overwhelmingly male, as is those who research and write about castles, conservation and heritage generally; out of more than 300 books and academic articles listed in the bibliography of this thesis, more than 95% were written by men. This may simply be a reflection of the gender divide in any area of history (except gender and feminist studies), although castles are even more starkly gendered than most topics in a largely male-dominated subject. The photograph below shows Judy Steel in front of Aikwood Tower with the restoration team which consisted of twenty-six men, but no women.

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<sup>348</sup> Graham Carson in Clow, 166

<sup>349</sup> Ann Saddlemeyer **Becoming George: The Life of Mrs W. B. Yeats** (2002) Oxford University Press, USA, publisher's blurb

<sup>350</sup> These three projects are described by Walker in Clow



FIGURE 41 AIKWOOD TOWER<sup>351</sup>

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### CORPORATE OWNERS

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‘Corporate’ has connotations of City business conglomerates, but the majority of the fifteen non-individual restorers of castles were charities, clans, communes, small businesses and local councils. Their reasons for restoring the castles were all to do with rescuing heritage, but the end uses were as varied as those of the individual owners, and the results a mixture of successful and unsuccessful projects. The largest number of corporate restorations was carried out by building trusts, which mostly equipped the building for holiday letting after the restoration was complete, although the Strathclyde Building Trust eventually sold Newmilns Tower after restoration. The holiday lets are run by the Landmark Trust (Castle of Park, Saddell), the Vivat Trust (Barns Tower, Tower of Hallbar) and the Buildings of Scotland Preservation Trust (Liberton Tower). Merchiston Castle was restored between 1958 and 1964 for accommodation for Napier College administration. The work was of its time and would not be acceptable in the twenty-first century:

Exhibited like a trophy in the middle of the college is Merchiston Castle, the late mediaeval L-plan tower house of the Napiers.....As if to dispel undue awe in the face of antiquity, a concrete dog-leg stair leaps up to the second floor south entrance and an elevated corridor slices through the projecting north jamb.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Photograph by John Grieve, Galashiels

<sup>352</sup> John Gifford, Colin McWilliam and David Walker **Edinburgh** (The Buildings of Scotland) (1991) Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 497

Menstrie and Pitheavlis were also restored in the 1950s, to be used for local authority housing<sup>353</sup>. Even if the quality of the work was not up to current standards, the councils were far-sighted enough to save the buildings for a useful community purpose. The antithesis was Burntisland Council, which tried vigorously to destroy Rossend Castle - only saved by the interventions of Ian Begg and others of Robert Hurd and Partners firm of architects, for use as office space (see chapter five for the narrative). Dudhope Castle and Mains Castles were restored by Dundee City Council in the 1980s; the former is used for educational purposes and the latter was leased until recently to a company which used it as a wedding venue. Castle Menzies is a clan centre and Alloa (administered by the NTS) and Mugdock are open to the public as museums. Monimail is one of four towers which originally surrounded the courtyard of the summer palace of the archbishops of St Andrews and was razed during the Reformation. It is owned by an educational trust and lived in by a fluctuating number of inhabitants who live communally<sup>354</sup> – the only castle restoration project which has become a commune. Dollarbeg is also lived in by a number of owners, but not as a commune – it was bought by a building development company, Manor Kingdom, and divided into flats in 2006 before being sold to separate owners.<sup>355</sup> Out of eighteen corporate restorations, only two – Newmilns and Dollarbeg – are completely privately owned.

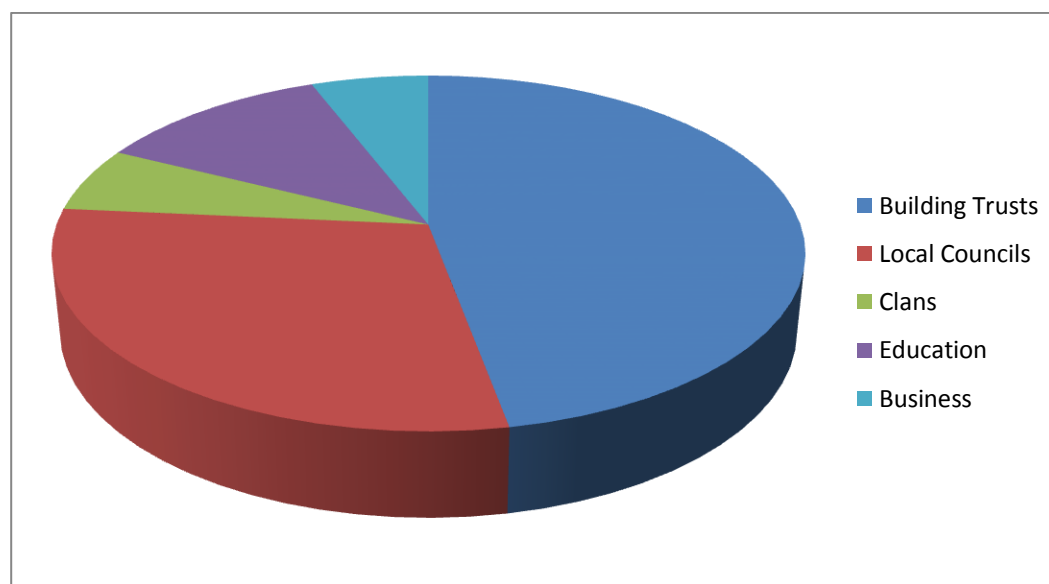


TABLE 15 TYPES OF CORPORATE RESTORER

<sup>353</sup> David Walker in Clow, 20

<sup>354</sup> Richard Fawcett and Allan Rutherford **Renewed Life for Scottish Castles**, 156

<sup>355</sup> Kirsty McLuckie 'Rich pickings to be had in Dollar' **The Scotsman** June 15, 2006

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## OLD OWNERS

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Eight castles were restored by existing owners, some of whom belonged to ‘old’ families who had owned the building for several generations at least. In the introduction to the nineteenth edition of *Burke’s Landed Gentry*, Elizabeth Roads addressed the issue of old and new families:

The late, and great, Sir Ian Moncrieffe of that ilk, later Albany Herald of Arms, wrote in an introduction to the 1952, 17<sup>th</sup> edition of *Burke’s Landed gentry*: “People often speak of ‘old families’. In fact, of course, no family is older than any other. What is meant is that the particular families called ‘old’ have managed to maintain their identity and retain records of their past longer than the majority of other folk.” Thus it is that over a period of time ‘old families’ may lose their direct connection with the land, although still be of important genealogical and historical interest and ‘new families’ will acquire the land and in time become ‘old’ landed families. The population is therefore ever shifting in this regard.<sup>356</sup>

Moncrieffe’s words are somewhat disingenuous. Private genealogical research now allows countless families of humble origins to access records and documentation of their past identities<sup>357</sup>, but they would never be classified as ‘old’ on Moncrieff’s terms. What he means by ‘old’ families is landed families, which is the point made by Roads, when she observed that new families in time become old families. J. Mordaunt Crook, in *The Rise of the Nouveaux Riches*<sup>358</sup>, examines in detail the journey from obscurity to money, land and title which was undertaken by Victorian super-rich entrepreneurs. In Scotland, the alcohol-funded Walker and Bulmer families were among those who bought Scottish castles with the money they made (Newark and Amhuinnsuidhe, respectively), and gradually became seen as part of the landed gentry. The majority of the ‘old family’ restorers have not written or been interviewed about their motivations and the process of their restoration, so their narratives are not in the public domain and most cannot be accessed beyond the bare facts of dates. It is difficult to infer motives for the restorations. One, at least, was not done at the instigation of the owner: Ian Begg, the architect responsible for the restoration of Muckrach castle, recounted the fact that the Chief Planning Officer of Inverness County Council called the owners’ attention to the fact that it was a listed building in poor shape and they had a responsibility to do something about it. Begg wrote: “I remember this as a cold job, which wasn’t warmed by the relationship between us and the son of the original client”<sup>359</sup> (presumably Sir Euan Hamilton Anstruther-Gough-Calthorpe).

Barns Tower in the Borders was restored by Elizabeth Benson, in conjunction with the Vivat Trust, and won a ‘special restoration award’ in the Scottish Borders Council’s Design Award Scheme. She

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<sup>356</sup> Elizabeth Roads, Introduction to **Burke’s Landed Gentry of Great Britain** (19th edition 2001) Burke’s Peerage and Gentry LLC, Delaware USA, xvi

<sup>357</sup> Felipe Fernandez-Arnesto reported that 70% of researchers at the Public records Office are engaged in private genealogical research, in the epilogue of David Cannadine (ed) **What is History Now?** (2002) Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 158

<sup>358</sup> J. Mordaunt Crook **The Rise of the Nouveaux Riches**

<sup>359</sup> Ian Begg ‘Muckrach Castle – for occupation’ in Clow, 44

gave an interview to Period Property UK, which featured the restoration of Barns Tower as 'Period Property of the Month' for April 2008:

It's all very well having a scheduled ancient monument in the grounds of your estate. But when you can actually see it out of the window of your own house, and have to watch it going to rack and ruin on an almost daily basis, the pressure to do something about it gradually becomes irresistible. So it was for Lady Elizabeth Benson, daughter of the Earl of Wemyss, chatelaine of the Barns Estate near Peebles in the Scottish Borders.<sup>360</sup>

The article goes on: "Lady Elizabeth demonstrated how centuries of noblesse oblige sometimes allows one to think just that little bit bigger. When she was told the work would need scaffolding all round the building for nine months, at a cost of £10,000, she simply bought the scaffolding outright." The implication of the article is that 'noblesse oblige' was the determining factor in motivating the restoration; a wealthy landowner from an 'old' family felt obliged to save a historic building from ruin – but only with the aid of a building trust charity which would take over the running and commercial letting of the castle. Rosslyn Castle near Edinburgh was restored in the 1980s by the Earl of Rosslyn and the Landmark Trust, possibly for the same reason, but nothing has been published about the restoration; likewise Whytbank Tower, in the Borders, was restored between 1988 and 1992 by the Pringle family. Coxton Tower has been extensively repaired – but never occupied – as an ongoing project since 1989 by Malcolm Christie, whose family bought the property in 1910. Fenton Tower near Edinburgh was restored between 1998 and 2002 by farmer Ian Simpson and Kinlochaline, in the West Highlands, by Hugh Raven (who bought the tower from his sister, as part of the family estate in the West Highlands)<sup>361</sup> between 1998 and 2000.

All of these families owned estates or farms at the time of the restoration, and had other houses on their land in which to live during the rebuilding. This is one major difference between them and the new owners, who may have had somewhere else to live, but not as part of their own landed estate. The motivations for the restorations carried out by old owners could be accounted for by a range of factors: noblesse oblige, the providing of a house for a family member, the grasping of a commercial opportunity, or simply a desire to put back what had been lost. However, the numbers are small, especially when compared with the numbers of old owners who sold their ruins to potential restorers who had no connection with the land or building, or who have a ruined castle or tower on their estate but have **not** restored it.

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## THE SELLERS

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Many of the new owners had bought from an 'old owner', a member of the landed class who had owned the building for generations. Examples are Aikwood Castle, bought by David and Judy Steel from the Duke of Buccleuch, or Inverquhar, bought by Sandy Grant from the Kinaldie Estate.

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<sup>360</sup> [http://www.periodproperty.co.uk/ppuk\\_discovering\\_ppom\\_200804.shtml](http://www.periodproperty.co.uk/ppuk_discovering_ppom_200804.shtml) accessed November 2010

<sup>361</sup> No byline 'The Scottish castle with a home on top' **Daily Telegraph** 17<sup>th</sup> December 2003

'old' landowning family	31
a farmer	8
a corporate body	8
a failed would-be restorer	4
not known	29

**Table 16 The sellers of ruined castles**

Of those castles purchased from a 'failed would-be restorer', two had originally been purchased from an old owner, with a view to restoration, and two from a farmer. Given that it is probable that about half of the 'not known' category were in fact sold by old owners, but without enough evidence to count them as definite, the shift in ownership of towers and castles from the landed classes to a new type and class of owner can be seen quite clearly. The farmers, too, almost certainly purchased their ruinous towers from the landed gentry, mostly during the 1920s, when falling land prices after the two world wars forced landowners to sell, usually to their tenant farmers. "A veritable social revolution was underway as former tenant farmers bought up land from the great proprietors on a remarkable scale. In 1914 only 11 per cent of Scottish farmland was owner-occupied, but by 1930 the figure had climbed to over 30 per cent."<sup>362</sup> Among the restorers, the sole farmer, Ian Simpson, inherited Fenton Tower, which was situated on the farm his great-grandfather bought in 1906.<sup>363</sup>

### SECTION THREE: *WHEN WERE THE RESTORERS?*

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In the seventies, restorers might well have been seen as one of the many products of the new democratic age: romantic enthusiasts paradoxically saving and adapting against a background of large scale town centre development and wholesale demolition of country houses. Since then, the honing of conservation theory and practice, together with privatization fears and new assumptions about the commercial value of property, has made professionals and public more wary.<sup>364</sup>

The numbers of restorers increased and their social class composition changed as the decades went on, reflecting the changes in society which are discussed in chapter two. Because the social world was changing, the meaning and perceived value of the restorations also changed; restorations in the 1990s were subject to greater scrutiny and control by professionals than those done in the 1950s and 60s and to greater media exposure. This section is laid out in chronological order, so that some of these developments over time can be seen. The decade in which the work was carried out, or at least begun, also had a major influence on the quality of the work and the

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<sup>362</sup> Tom M.Devine **The Scottish Nation 1700-2000** (2000) Penguin Books, London, 454

<sup>363</sup> Ben West 'High cost of holding the fort' **The Observer** 11 December 2005

<sup>364</sup> Michael C. Davis 'Castle Tioram and the restoration debate' in Clow (2000), 193

ideology behind it. The more recent the work, the more likely it is to be of high quality and to adhere to current principles of good practice; concrete and cement were liberally used in earlier restorations, even in Kinkell, despite Laing's great care to work in sympathy with the original building - to the extent that he demolished an eighteenth century extension. A combination of the tightening of regulatory powers, increased knowledge and understanding about sixteenth century materials and techniques, and changes in ideology all contributed to a general improvement in quality.

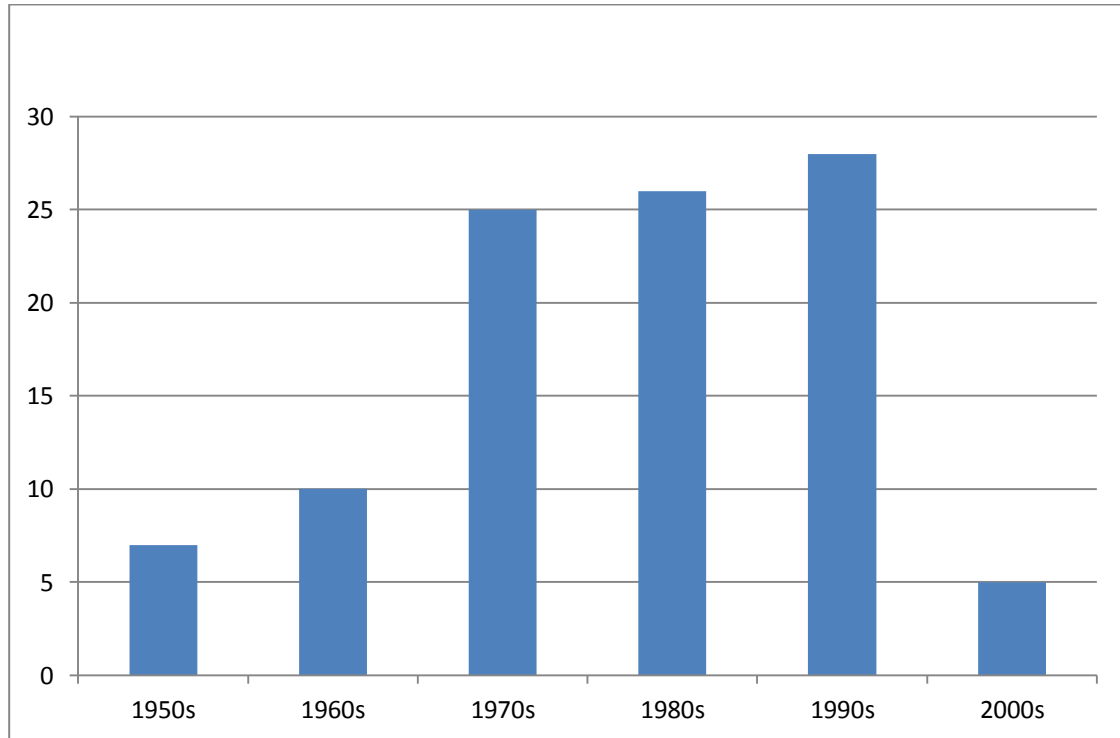


TABLE 17 NUMBERS OF CASTLE RESTORATIONS **BEGUN** IN EACH DECADE

In this graph can be seen the steady increase in numbers of restorations over time, with a fall-off in numbers after 2000. There follows a chronological survey of who purchased and restored what buildings when.

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### 1945 - 59

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In the 1950s, only four castles were bought for restoration by individuals – by the Queen Mother (the Castle of Mey), the Earl of Perth (Stobhall), Archibald Hope Dickson, who had bought the ruinous House of Aldie as a gentleman's residence, after working in the Far East (no more is known about him) and Gordon Millar, a chartered accountant and former WW2 pilot, who bought Torwood and spent forty years 'playing' at restoring the building, but achieving practically nothing.<sup>365</sup> So, in the first decade there were two aristocrats, one wealthy man with the means to employ an expensive architect (Ian Lindsay) and furnish the house with works of art after its

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<sup>365</sup> Nigel J.C. Turnbull **Gordon Millar of Torwood Castle** unpublished essay, 2010



restoration<sup>366</sup>, and one professional man with a vision or fantasy of restoring Torwood Castle, but no means with which to do so. The first three buyers represented the pre WW2 world, in which only the privileged bought castles; all successfully restored their buildings and moved in, although the Queen Mother used hers only as a holiday home. Gordon Millar was the first of the 'hobby restorers', who purchased a ruin cheaply – from the Carron Ironworks Company, in this case – and moved in, living there without electricity or running water for many years, but he is not counted in the statistics of this thesis, as he never came near to finishing any work that might count as a restoration. In addition to the castles purchased for restoration by individuals, the Menzies Clan Society bought Castle Menzies in 1957, but did little apart from some roof repairs until 1971, when the Clan commissioned a survey and restoration plan.<sup>367</sup> The restoration of Kisimul was begun in 1956 by Robert Lister MacNeil, who had purchased the building and done some initial clearances and excavations in 1937. Menstrie and Pitheavlis were both turned into local authority housing, the former as a restoration project and the latter as repairs.

The Earl of Perth bought Stobhall Castle from the Earl of Ancaster, who had intended to 'give it to the nation':

David Perth and his dynamic American wife Nancy devoted themselves to the restoration of Stobhall. The Dower House was riddled with wet and dry rot and had to be almost gutted and re-roofed, leaving only the stone staircase and its wonderful plaster ceiling. They built the passage which connects the Dower House to the Kitchen. Later, in 1965, they built the Library on the site of a pair of earlier decrepit cottages. Massive work was required to stabilise the courtyard because the Pend and burn side wall were slipping into the den.<sup>368</sup>

However, although the Earl of Perth devoted himself to the restoration of Stobhall and lived there until his death at the age of 95, the quality of the work which he oversaw was poor. When the castle was taken over by his grandson, in 2004, the latter began a necessary renewal of the original restoration, with replacements of many of the window surrounds, crow-steps, chimneys and other stonework - largely because of the bad advice in the 1950s by the Ministry of Works to use hard, non-porous cement for the re-pointing.<sup>369</sup> Macneil of Barra was also badly advised over the restoration of Kisimul by the Ministry of Works, who referred him to a reinforced concrete supply company. As RCAHMS admitted forty-five years later: "The 20<sup>th</sup> century rebuild was largely conjectural, making liberal use of concrete and cement render."<sup>370</sup> The quality of the work in the earliest restorations in the period was very inferior to that done in the 1990s and 2000s, by which time an understanding of the importance of using lime

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<sup>366</sup> Sheila Forman **Scottish Country Houses and Castles** (1967) George Outram & Co., Perth, chapter on House of Aldie, 44-46

<sup>367</sup> <http://www.menzies.org/castle/index.htm> accessed September 2009

<sup>368</sup> [http://www.stobhall.com/pages/history\\_5.html](http://www.stobhall.com/pages/history_5.html) Stobhall Castle website, history page. Accessed November 2010

<sup>369</sup> [http://www.stobhall.com/pages/history\\_4.html](http://www.stobhall.com/pages/history_4.html) accessed November 2010

<sup>370</sup> <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/21390/details/barra+kiessimul+castle/> (RCHAMS website, quote taken from **Western Seaboard: An Illustrated Architectural Guide**, by Mary Miers, 2008. Published by the Rutland Press.)

mortar, lime paint and lime harling had developed, particularly after the setting up of the Scottish Lime Centre, a 'not for profit' organization which started in 1994.

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### 1960-69

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Ten castles were purchased for restoration during the 1960s: Balfluig, Balbithan, Castle Stalker, Fordell, Garth, Kinkell, Towie Barclay, Inverquhar, Pitcullo and Breachacha. The first seven of these were purchased by new owners bent on acquiring a castle to restore and live in (or, in the case of Garth, as a holiday home). Breachacha was bought back as a symbol of clan stronghold by Major Maclean-Bristol, a professional soldier. Balfluig in Aberdeenshire was bought and restored by Mark Tennant, barrister son of Sir Iain Tennant, in 1966 - 67. Balbithan, also in Aberdeenshire, was purchased by the widowed artist Mary McMurtrie. Kinkell was restored as a DIY project by the sculptor and artist Gerald Laing, whose narrative is in chapter four. Pitcullo was restored in the late 1960s by a Mr and Mrs Roy Spence; he was an architect. It was restored for a second time by Sir Angus Grossart, merchant banker, in the late 1970s after a serious fire. Towie Barclay was bought in 1969 and restored by the musician Marc Ellington, who still lived in the restored castle in 2010<sup>371</sup>. Inverquhar was bought by Sandy Grant, a former colonial civil servant. Garth Castle in Glenlyon was restored by a Mr Fry, who had bought Garth to use as a holiday home.

Designed initially by a local firm in Aberfeldy, Mr. Fry's work was not at all archaeologically based and would not receive listed building consent now. What had been built of Heiton's caphouse was cleared off to form a sun-deck rook and the upper floors treated as one large space with a sleeping gallery, the English architect Leonard Manasseh being brought in too late to achieve a more presentable result.....Although Garth itself was a failure, at least in historical and architectural terms, *the concept caught on.*<sup>372</sup> (italics added)

So, in the 1960s can be seen the beginnings of the concept of castle restoration, but still on a small scale and mainly in the hands of relatively well-off professional owners: two artists, one musician, one barrister, an architect, an army commissioned officer and a man who could afford to have a castle restored as his holiday home (Mr Fry, about whom nothing else is known). All of the restorations were carried out quite quickly, except for Breachacha, which became a long-term project. Progress towards a climate of conservation was still slow; more than twice as many castles were destroyed – seventeen – as were restored during the 1960s. The castle restoration movement as an adventurous pursuit for young couples of limited means was yet to take off.

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### 1970-79

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By the 1970s, the pace was picking up and the pattern of ownership was changing quite markedly. Fourteen castle restoration projects were begun by new owners who had purchased the building with the express purpose of restoration. These were: Aiket, Balgonie, Balmuto, Barscobe,

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<sup>371</sup> The story of the restoration of Towie Barclay is told in J S Smith (ed) **North East Castles. Castles in the Landscape of North East Scotland** (1990)

<sup>372</sup> Walker in Clow, 22

Cramond, Edinample, Fawside, Harthill, Midmar, Niddrie, Pitfichie, Powrie, Ravenstone and Rusco, some of which were bought by DIY restorers in the same mould as Gerald Laing at Kinkell. In addition, Castle Stuart was leased by the Canadian couple Charles and Elizabeth Stuart from the Earl of Moray, not bought. Between 1977 and 2010 they have reported spending two million dollars on the restoration of the castle, partly financed by paying guests.<sup>373</sup> The Stuarts live in a cottage in the grounds and run the castle as a private hotel. The social spread of the 1970s restorers was much wider than previously, and included three owners who did not complete the restoration of their castle (Balgonie, Niddrie and Ravenstone), and who sold on to other would-be restorers. None of the three properties was finished in 2010, but all three were lived in and still being worked on by their new owners. Two Americans were among the 1970s restorers – Harry Boswell, a lawyer and property developer, who restored Balmuto Tower, a Boswell castle in Fife, and Ann Tweedy Savage, a writer, traveller and philanthropist who restored Harthill Castle in Aberdeenshire, after taking advice from Nigel Tranter.<sup>374</sup> Barscobe Castle was restored by Sir Hugh Wontner, top hotelier and politician; he had purchased the large estate on which it stood in 1961, having rented Barscobe House, a 1920s house also on the estate, as a holiday home in previous years. He was advised in the project by Dame Bridget D'Oyly Carte, who was the first tenant once the restoration was finished and who lived there until her death in 1985. Midmar was restored by Ric Wharton, a successful entrepreneur from the shipping and oil industries, Pitfichie by an Aberdeen antiques dealer, Edinample by the architect Nicholas Groves-Raines and Powrie by a BBC journalist and her politician husband. Narratives about Aiket (publisher), Fawside (engineer), Rusco (businessman) and Cramond (amateur historian and taxidermist) are contained in chapter four.

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## 1980 – 89

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The restoration of nineteen castles was begun in the 1980s, seventeen of which were purchased by individual restorers, mostly for rebuilding as a home or holiday home. They were: Ackergill, Castle Grant, Castle Levan, Couston, Craiggaffie, Forter, Gagie House, Hatton, Hillslap, Law, Leslie, Lochhouse, Mains, Peffermill House, Spedlins, Tillycairn and Terpersie. All of these restorers were 'new' owners who had not had any connection with the buildings previously and were not from the landowning classes. The seventeen also represented a wide range of backgrounds and professions. In this decade there were several 'serial restorers' and also architects. Spedlins was restored by Stephen Yorke, who, according to Nick Gray, the present owner:

restored Spedlins, with his brother-in law who, I believe, did much of the manual work, [and] told me that he had previously restored a house I think in Gloucestershire. I assume that he was English. After he sold Spedlins to us he began restoring a property in France. He restored houses to sell. He said that he began his career as a gunsmith. We found that there was quite a bit to do. The roof

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<sup>373</sup> Gerry Hall 'Guests and ghosts mingle at Stuart's Highland castle' **The Toronto Star** August 1 1992

<sup>374</sup> Gordon Casely 'Obituary of Ann Savage' **The Herald (Glasgow)** February 10, 2005

leaked. The septic tank did not work There was no central heating. The open fire in the living room smoked to such an extent that you couldn't use it."<sup>375</sup>

The architects who bought and restored four of the castles in the 1980s almost certainly made a better job than was done at Spedlins. They were: Philip Mercer, who restored Hillslap Tower in the Borders; France Smoor, a Dutch architect who bought and restored Gachie House in Angus and also advised on the restoration of Tilquhillie; Ken Murdoch, who bought and restored Methven Castle over a period of five years, then published a book about the project twenty years later; the architect David Leslie, who was 'buying back' family heritage at Leslie Castle; and Nicholas Groves-Raines, the architect who restored Peffermill House and also restored Edinample in the 1960s and Liberton House in the 1980s – he was a 'serial restorer'. Other serial restorers were Cumbrian farmer Tom Clarke, who restored Lochhouse and also Kilmartin and Howgill Castle in England and David Lumsden of Cushnie, who was buying back family heritage at Tillycairn in Aberdeenshire. He held the heraldic title of Garioch Pursuivant to the Chief and Name and Arms of Mar, and was a leading figure in Scottish heritage circles. Lumsden was co-founder and chairman of the Castles of Scotland Preservation Trust, which restored Liberton Tower in the 1990s; he was also president of the Scottish Military History Society and convener of the Monarchist League of Scotland.

In this decade two restorers ran out of money before completion. Hatton Castle was restored by Roderick Oliphant, who planned to make it a clan centre, but ran out of money just before it was finished; the building was repossessed. The restoration was later finished by the Anderson family. Law Castle was bought by a businessman, Mr Philips; the restoration was started but not finished and the building was sold, with the owner 'fleeing' abroad to avoid the action raised by lawyers acting on behalf of the Scottish Executive in Aberdeen Sheriff Court:

A spokesman for Historic Scotland said it was the organization's statutory duty to try to recover the funds, adding that it was the £116,000 grant for the final phase of work that it was seeking to retrieve. "If someone buys a historic property and receives a grant to aid the restoration of it but fails to comply with the conditions of the award, then it is our duty to recover it. Similarly, it someone sells a property that we had awarded grants to for a huge profit then we would also seek to recover a proportion of the profits. We can confirm that we are taking action to recover a proportion of the grant from the sale of Law Castle as part of our statutory requirements."<sup>376</sup>

This was quite an unusual event in the history of restorations; HS only rarely took legal action against owners. Couston was also restored by a businessman, Alastair Harper, who was obviously more successful than the owner of Law Castle. Ackergill, which was derelict rather than ruinous, was bought from the Duff Dunbar family and restored by a businessman, John Banister, and his business partners, and turned into luxury catered accommodation. An advertising executive and art collector, David Pearson, restored Castle Levan, where he and his wife lived until their retirement in 1995. Forter Castle in Perthshire was restored by Robert Pooley, owner of Pooley Aviation Ltd and other companies. Castle Grant was bought and re-roofed by Paul Dobson, then

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<sup>375</sup> Personal communication by e-mail 16<sup>th</sup> March 2008

<sup>376</sup> Lorna Martin 'Father, daughter hunted by heritage watchdog' **The Glasgow Herald** 10 August 2002

sold on before the restoration was finished. It was sold again a further six times between 1985 and 2006, and in 2010 its future still seemed uncertain, so it has not been counted in the statistics. Its large size and consequent large maintenance costs probably militate against a secure future. Craigcaffie was restored by a couple who engaged a firm of architects to manage the restoration; Mains Castle was restored by the entertainer Mike Rowan and Terpersie was restored by an army officer, Captain Lachlan Rhodes. In addition, Dudhope Castle was restored by Dundee District Council and Whytbank Tower in the Borders, which had been very ruinous, by the Pringle family, who were the original builders in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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### 1990 - 99

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In the 1990s twenty-six castle restorations were started, the largest number of any decade; a kind of movement had gained momentum. Seventeen were bought by individual restorers, most of whom must have been aware of and inspired by the restorations which had begun in previous decades. These were Abbot's Tower, Aikwood, Allardice, Ballencrieff, Ballone, Buittle Tower, Carrick, Dairsie, Dunduff, Gilnockie, Kilmartin, Kinlochaline, Kirkhope, Melgund, Plane, Sundrum and Tilquhillie. The restoring owners of these buildings mostly belonged to the 'middle class professionals' group, with two architects (Allardice and Ballone). The majority were successful restorations, in that their rebuilding provoked little controversy, although the work done on Abbot's Tower was largely speculative, and the owner of Dairsie Castle was pursued through the courts by Historic Scotland for using reconstituted stone (see chapter four 'Battles with the Authorities'). The restoration of Sundrum Castle in Ayrshire, however, was very controversial. It was restored on an 'enabling development' ticket supported by the local council, and also an astonishing £500,000 grant from Historic Scotland in 1995, for what appeared to be a developer's get-rich-quick scheme involving selling on building plots within the estate to other developers for profit. Objections had been made by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, the Scottish Civic Trust, and Scottish Natural Heritage.

The remaining nine, which were mostly restored by building trusts or local authorities, were Alloa Tower, Barns Tower, Hallbar, Liberton, Muckrach, Newmilns, Monimail and Formakin (the last was made habitable by the building developer Kit Martin and sold). Fenton was restored by a farmer who inherited it.

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### 2000 - 2010

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After a steady increase in the numbers of castles restored in each decade since 1945, after 2000 the wave seemed to be dying back, possibly because of dwindling supplies, or economic factors, or possibly because the popular movement had begun to run its course. Only five castles, Barholm, Duncraig, Gogar, Old Sauchie and Stoneypath, were begun and completely restored after 2000. Johnstone Castle was started in 2004 and is reportedly planned to be completed in

December 2011<sup>377</sup>. Several owners were planning to restore if they could get round problems of finance (Baltersan - now for sale after its would-be restoring owner put it on the market), planning permission (Tioram and Rowallan) and other, undefined problems (Newark in Fife, Ecclesgreig, Dunskey, St Monance, Lordscairnie). Balintore Castle, a derelict gothic mansion in Angus with fifty rooms, was bought in 2008 by David Johnstone, who is set to become another long-term impoverished restorer prepared to suffer privation.

He spent last summer camping out in the castle's former laundry until concerned friends persuaded him to live on the castle site in a caravan. Life is tough for him because of the state that Balintore is in. He has to collect rainwater to wash his dishes, and takes showers at work.<sup>378</sup>

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## CONCLUSIONS

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The three approaches to the data in this chapter amount to a kind of triangulation (although the methodology is similar in all three cases), which enables a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation to emerge. The last section, on chronology, illustrates the kinds of social changes which were taking place during the postwar decades and which are briefly described in chapter two. Not only were more castles being restored by new owners, the social class composition of the owners was steadily changing. Types of owners have been classified and described, and the factors of profession, nationality and gender examined. In terms of the buildings, the 'modal' restored castle would be a small and simple sixteenth century ruined tower in a rural location, which had lain empty for over a century, surrounded by a small amount of ground. The seller would be a farmer or 'old' landowner and the buyer would be a youngish middle class professional couple from Scotland with a great deal of enthusiasm about castles but limited knowledge of architectural history, limited financial resources and no history of landowning. They would do at least some of the physical work themselves and take from two to five years to complete the rebuilding, which they would then occupy as a family home. More than fifty per cent of the castles which were bought for restoration fit, more or less, this description. There is a clear identity, almost homogeneity, in the majority of the cases; this was a *social* phenomenon in much the same way as the German aristocratic revival of mediaeval castles at the end of the nineteenth century (see chapter two *European castles*). Those individual restorations which do not fit the above pattern were carried out by architects, wealthy owners and/or entrepreneurs; the rest were restored by corporate owners.

One factor which has **not** been surveyed in this chapter is the cost of the rebuilding projects. This is because costs are almost impossible to pin down, due to differing relative values over time and in the size, degree of complexity, professionalism and quality of the work, allied to the resources of the owner and the availability or otherwise of government financial assistance. These factors are addressed, as far as is possible, in the next chapter on processes and outcomes of change, along with questions on how many were subsequently sold (for a profit), how many were started

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<sup>377</sup> Paula Murray 'Chopin slept in castle that will be home to our family' **Sunday Express** October 10, 2010

<sup>378</sup> Jenny McBain 'I captured a castle' **The Times** May 4 2008

but never finished and how many were not restored by the first would-be restoring owners. The problems which besieged the new individual owners were many and major: lack of adequate finance, battles with the authorities, hostile neighbours and appalling weather. Those who succeeded did so in the teeth of adversity; the examples and quotes contained in the next chapter illustrate their trials.

## CHAPTER 4 PROBLEMS, PROCESSES & OUTCOMES

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Castle restoration is a highly idiosyncratic endeavor, requiring extreme levels of optimism, patience and, above all, tenacity. The obstacles facing prospective restorers are of heroic proportions.<sup>379</sup>

In this chapter both processes and outcomes of change are considered, along with the problems that any rebuilding project brings. Michael Davis used a literary metaphor to describe the restoration process: “Almost all restorations, beyond simple consolidations, involve major intervention, and restoration can consequently seldom be seen as ‘archaeological’ reconstruction, much less as repair. It must instead be viewed as another chapter in the history of the building, for better or worse.”<sup>380</sup> This has a peaceful quality, but the process of restoring a historic building for reoccupation often involves ‘battles’, both physical and metaphorical, rather than ‘chapters’. Physically, many restorers engaged in activities demanding heroic feats of endurance, such as singlehandedly hauling large quantities of rubble around a building site or living in squalid conditions whilst carrying out heavy manual work, and these are related in almost all of the restoration narratives. Metaphorically, any large building project is apt to present a mountain of difficulties to climb, from financial uncertainties and unforeseen problems to strain on family relationships and exhaustion clouded by pessimism. These do not feature as frequently in restoration narratives, but the longer – and perhaps more honest? – accounts tend to admit to difficulties during the course of their project. Administratively, battles with the authorities were a feature of a significant proportion of projects. They are dealt with in some detail here, as the individual arguments that simmered or raged between castle owners and HS, mediated by the local and national newspapers, rehearse the larger issues of motivation, representation, wherewithal, historicity, authenticity, integrity and continuity which permeate the debate about whether or not to restore a ruin.

In terms of outcomes, it is a *sine qua non* that things change when a castle is restored. The most noticeable change is usually in the outward appearance of the building; many ‘before’ and ‘after’ pictures are radically different, particularly when the building has been harled for the first time in living memory. A familiar grey stone ruin partly covered in ivy and surrounded by long grass and wild flowers may become an imposingly bright white tower with a formal garden and a car park. Not everyone admires that kind of change, as will be seen. Secondly, access to the castle for the local community may change if a ruined castle is restored by individuals for use as a private family home. Local ruins are often used as playgrounds by adventurous children or as (romantic) trysts by teenagers and adults and may be sorely missed. On the other hand, local people may be delighted to see that a deteriorating building – maybe even a blot on the landscape – in danger of collapse has been rescued. During rebuilding, local labour and craftsmen can find work, sometimes over several years, and after completion gardeners and housekeepers are often employed.

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<sup>379</sup> John Coyne, ‘Tilquhillie Castle – the owner’s approach’ in Robert Clow (ed.) **Restoring Scotland’s Castles** (2000) John Smith & Son, Glasgow, 67

<sup>380</sup> Davis **Scots Baronial**, 56



Inside, the appearance of restored castles is also radically different, perhaps even more so than outside, if the outer grey stone has been left unharmed. New floors, walls, kitchens and bathrooms are installed, with furnishings brought in to show off the setting. Almost all restorers claim to want 'authenticity' in their restored building, although some strive harder than others. But 'authenticity' is one of those multivalent terms which has a different meaning for each restorer. What most are aiming for is a return to an idealised original, a recapturing of what had once been. France Smoor, restoring architect of Tilquhillie and Gachie, warned of "The romantic preoccupation with one or another period of an historic building [which] often leads the restorer away, trying to peel away subsequent or even previous layers of architecture to achieve an ideal image."<sup>381</sup> Blackhall Manor, Kirkhope Tower and Ballencrieff Castle were all restored by DIY builders using reclaimed materials which they sourced themselves. At Blackhall Manor "The plumbing, plastering, tile-laying and slating were done by tradesmen; all other work was done by Alex Strachan, with volunteer unskilled labour, "working 2½ days each week and all holidays." Around 30,000 bricks and 30 tons of stone, much of it reclaimed, were used. Almost all the timber, including the beams in the Great Hall, were also reclaimed."<sup>382</sup> The fact that materials look old is a significant feature in the judgment of authenticity.

The restoring architects of Garth and Cleish castles, on the other hand, used modern materials and modern design to fill the interior spaces of their late mediaeval buildings. "Michael [Spens, architect and owner of Cleish Castle] devised a striking balcony support in the form of twin steel columns dipped in nickel at the Ipswich engineering workshop used at the time by Eduardo [Paolozzi] to construct his metal sculptures from industrial ready-made components. The result was a great 16th century space rejuvenated by the materials of the present. It deserved all the accolades it received in the international press and won a Saltire Award."<sup>383</sup> This was in the early 1970s; awards for such modernizing work would be unlikely in the twenty-first century, when faithful reinstatement of the last stage of the building's development is required by Historic Scotland. Cleish had been Georgianised during Victorian times; Spens stripped away the nineteenth century additions to create a late twentieth century interior filled with works of art by the sculptor Eduardo Paolozzi, including a complete ceiling and wall hangings. Although this was not truly a restoration in the terms defined in this thesis, as Cleish had been continuously occupied before Spens bought it, the changes were as extensive as many complete restorations of ruinous or derelict buildings. This was the only project where contemporary art formed a fundamental part of the structural changes to the building. However, the ceiling was removed after Spens sold Cleish in 1991 and a new ceiling was painted recently in sixteenth century style by artist Jennifer Merredew<sup>384</sup>.

Outcomes are considered in terms of changes in the way that castles are used, accessed and perceived within local and national contexts, and also in terms of changes in the surrounding

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<sup>381</sup> France Smoor 'Tilquhillie Castle' in Clow, 58

<sup>382</sup> Leith Stuart 'Blackhall Manor - an account of its history and restoration' **SCA Newsletter** issue 3

<sup>383</sup> Murray Grigor 'A Sort of Homecoming' February 28, 1999 **The Scotsman**

<sup>384</sup> <http://www.jennifernerredew.com/ceiling.htm> accessed December 2010

landscape resulting from the restorations. One major change that has taken place since 1945 is the increase in access to castles for the paying public, either as clients in overnight accommodation, wedding guests or day tripping tourists paying an entry fee to tour the interior. Restoring owners have diversified the uses of castles in other ways, including the management of business ventures, such as a deer stud farm (Midmar in Aberdeenshire), a nursery garden (Balbithan) and an architects' practice (Rossend). These examples are of businesses where sales could be enhanced by the siting of the objects for sale beside or within a castle – the grounds or interior of a 16<sup>th</sup> century tower could be a better venue to view breeding stags, buy garden plants, or visualize a restored building than a fenced farmyard, a purpose-built garden centre or a city office. Other restoring owners have used their castle as the base for a business that could be sited almost anywhere, e.g. Lachlan and Annie Stewart, who use Ballone Castle as the administrative headquarters of their business selling tartan tableware and fabrics.

Some of the restored castles became long-term family homes, but thirty-four were sold on the open market after their restoration, for a variety of reasons (see appendix 5 for the list of sales after restoration). The increase in numbers of sales of castles in general in the post WW2 period is evidence of the general commodification of castles. Some buildings changing hands multiple times; Castle Grant, for example, was sold nine times between 1983 and 2008. In 2008 alone, twenty-five castles were for sale on the open market at one time<sup>385</sup>. A survey of buyers and sellers, where identities are known, shows a marked shift in ownership away from the traditional landed class in Scotland towards individual nouveaux riches entrepreneurs and also corporate bodies such as Building Trusts and Clan Societies. Other restored castles changed hands within the family because the original restoring owner died (Balbithan) or decided to move to a more convenient house and the building passed on to the next generation (Methven, Rusco, Aikwood). Castle Stalker, Fordell and Harthill were inherited by widowed spouses. The one hundred buildings which were reoccupied have the glamour/kudos of being very obviously 'rescued'. At least as many again, however, were rescued from becoming uninhabitable by owners who carried out major repairs. Some castles had dramatic rescue packages which brought the building back from the brink of imminent disaster (e.g. Thirlestane); others had work done which was more than mere maintenance, as part of an expensive and ongoing process of keeping things safe, such as Craufordland in Ayrshire or Craichlaw in Wigtownshire. Craufordland and Craichlaw were repaired by existing 'old family' owners, but other castles, such as Ethie in Angus, Balnagowan in Inverness-shire and Drumtochtie in Aberdeenshire, were rescued and repaired by new owners.

A sad and unsatisfactory outcome is when a castle restoration is started and then stalled. Duntarvie, for example, was first scaffolded in 2003 and was put on the market, still scaffolded, in 2008. The very poorest owners ended up having to sell their properties before they could complete, or in some cases, begin the work, but some managed to struggle on and do their restoration over many years in a DIY fashion. Gordon Millar spent forty years working singlehandedly on Torwood Castle near Falkirk, living for much of the time without water or electricity, without ever having come near to completing a restoration of the building when he

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<sup>385</sup> Personal communication by e-mail, Stuart Morris of Balgonie Castle, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008

died in 1998.<sup>386</sup> His is an extreme example of the 'hobby restorer' who purchased a castle very cheaply in order to pursue an obsessive interest in rebuilding, which in many cases could never be fulfilled. Frank Renwick of Ravenstone Castle, Patrick Whitford of Barholm and James Brown of Baltersan are other examples. All three had to sell their castles after spending years clearing rubble and ivy, but achieving no substantial building work – apart from Frank Renwick, who used stones from Ravenstone to build his own fantasy gatehouse and homage to Princess Diana in the grounds (see figure 5). The moral and ethical issues arising from such unfulfilled dreams are troubling, especially when they involve changes that damage the fabric of the building. Issues about the protection of historic buildings and questions of who owns Scotland's 'heritage' and their rights and responsibilities are raised in this chapter.

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### PROBLEMS WITH PROCESSES: HARDSHIPS

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But our problems were minor compared with those experienced at Kisimul Castle in Barra. ....The castle has a high vaulted Great Hall. A friend of mine visited Macneil and, as they were sitting around the fire talking, he noticed that, not only was the ceiling dripping with moisture, but small clouds were forming high up in the room.<sup>387</sup>

Hardship, both physical and financial, is a major theme of the individual restorations. Robert Macneil suffered from the effects of clouds during, as well as after, the rebuilding work on Kisimul: "Time after time we had severe gales and driving rains, and there was literally no shelter of any kind in the entire castle, not one spot where we could stand or sit out of the pouring rain or strong winds."<sup>388</sup> The accounts of the restorers almost seem to vie with each other in the extent of their privations and efforts. At Glenapp Castle the work lasted for years:

The next five and a bit years were a blur of architects, planners, building control inspections, site meetings, consultants, workmen of every description, dirt, mess, power cuts, floods, leaks and all manner of major successes and setbacks. We worked all day and all evening, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Sometimes we weren't off the premises for weeks on end.<sup>389</sup>

At Kinkell: "Though there was little snow on the ground that year, it was bitterly cold. We made a brazier from an old oil drum and set it in the fireplace of the Great Hall. .... During our tea breaks we would huddle round it seated on blocks of wood or stone."<sup>390</sup> The Stewarts at Ballone also roughed it during the restoration: "They then settled into a tiny bothy next to the castle to begin the mammoth task of restoration. The bothy - which they built themselves - has just one big room. With three small children ..... living in such cramped conditions is no joke."<sup>391</sup> In Wales,

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<sup>386</sup> Nigel J.C. Turnbull **Gordon Millar of Torwood Castle** unpublished essay, 2010

<sup>387</sup> Laing **Kinkell**, 150

<sup>388</sup> Macneil, 170

<sup>389</sup> <http://www.glenappcastle.com/today.htm> accessed 20th August 2010

<sup>390</sup> Laing 169

<sup>391</sup> Isabel Oakeshott 'A Scotswoman's Home Is Her Castle' 19 May 1998 **Evening News (Edinburgh)**

Judy Corbett and her husband had only just moved in to start camping in their derelict mansion when disaster struck:

Jerry came bounding into the room and told us in one, long, sausaged-out sentence, that the river had burst its banks in the night and the garden was completely flooded and that we were cut off from the town and all our garden walls had been washed away and the cellars were full of water and the flood was still rising and some of our furniture was still outside in the courtyard and our car was floating around in the car park. And what did we want him to do? That was the moment reality hit. Not even I could kid myself that there was romance to be found in our current predicament.<sup>392</sup>

In Spain, Matthew Parris also suffered with the weather, but of a different kind, as he recorded in his diary at the time: "Only two steps done by lunchtime. Arms ache with lifting. Neck burning. Cicadas screech. Getting hotter...I'm dirty and sweaty. Contemplate fetching bathing water from cattle trough."<sup>393</sup>

Financial problems, too, often caused by the scale of the projects, dogged many restorers, although again the scale of them seems almost like a badge of honour rather than a source of terrible complaint:

Sam recently did a quick count of the rooms, and came up with the astonishing figure of 89. The roof needed immediate attention as it leaked, nearly every room has had to be replastered and redecorated, and wet rot ran riot among the ornate panelling and beams. A small section at the back of the house is little more than open timbers. It should, Perlin says, be demolished when you factor in the cost of restoring the place. I find myself staring open-mouthed at Perlin's stoicism. 'So far we have spent £150,000 restoring the house, and we've had to sell a couple of our houses to finance it,' she says. 'Everything to do with Duncraig seems to cost a fortune - the wallpaper for the front hall alone cost £3,000.'<sup>394</sup>

In Ireland, Nicholas Browne had also taken on a huge property for restoration, Castle Oliver, and he found himself in difficulties:

You have no fire insurance, no contents insurance, no insurance of any kind, other than for the car. Every penny you raise must go into the building and it is so difficult to pay the regular overheads, like electricity, food, clothing, motoring, etc., etc., that you simply are unable to afford to go on holiday, ever<sup>395</sup>

Technical problems also doubtless occurred in many projects, but the owners in their narratives tend to see them as challenges with amusing potential – see, for example, the case studies of Rusco and Tilquhillie – rather than serious setbacks. Although the stakes were high and the problems seemingly insurmountable in at least some of the projects, most owners

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<sup>392</sup> Corbett, 59

<sup>393</sup> Parris, 103

<sup>394</sup> Diana Appleyard 'Will the last laird please stand up?' **Daily Mail** 20 January 2007

<sup>395</sup> Nicholas Browne **Castles and Crocodiles** (2007) Long John Silver Publishing (no location given), 46 - 47

appear almost to have relished the challenges they presented. From a psychological viewpoint, the well-established principle of cognitive dissonance goes some way towards explaining the level of discomfort and hardship that so many individual restorers were prepared to undergo in order to achieve their ends. Briefly, cognitive dissonance theory states that we have a motivational drive to reduce dissonance, which is caused by holding two conflicting ideas simultaneously (e.g. “This project is costing me more time, money and effort than I can possibly afford,” and “I am an intelligent, reasonable person who makes rational decisions.”) In order to reduce dissonance we rationalize and justify our behaviour, usually by emphasizing the positive aspects of the efforts involved. The original experiments involved asking subjects to perform lengthy, boring and pointless tasks, which they later evaluated as having been **more** fun and worthwhile if they had been paid **less** to do them (the ‘\$1/\$20 effect’<sup>396</sup>). This seems counter-intuitive, until one grasps the point that we have a greater need to justify expending effort if the immediate outcome – e.g. yet more expenditure and hard labour – does not seem obviously beneficial. The castle restorers who struggled and (almost) failed with their difficult rebuilding were emphatic in their defence of the value of what they were doing; in fact, they boasted about it. The harder things became, the more devoted they were to their projects. Several owners mentioned the fact that once they had become committed so far, it became impossible to envisage stopping.

Those projects which failed through lack of finance are addressed later in this chapter. In addition to expending gargantuan physical efforts and/or being prey to serious financial problems, many restorers also found themselves in conflict with ‘the authorities’ in one way or another. The next section describes some of the problems which arose.

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### BATTLES WITH THE AUTHORITIES

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I draw attention to the groundbreaking and important castles initiative, which represents a whole new way of working for Historic Scotland. Scotland has a long tradition of successful castle and tower-house restoration, which is not as expensive as one might think. Restoration must be undertaken with the involvement of and not in opposition to Historic Scotland. That is precisely what is happening through the castles initiative, which provides information about available properties and about how Historic Scotland can help the restoration process.<sup>397</sup>

There exists a tension between professionals and amateurs, between the scholarly account and the viewpoint of popular culture in many significant areas of life, such as medicine, art, psychology and history. In the world of Scottish castles, HS officials represent the professionals and the restorers are mainly – apart from the architects – amateurs. Power struggles between the two were understandable during the ‘heyday’ of castle purchase for restoration in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. The restorers wielded power through their very ownership of the ruinous castles they

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<sup>396</sup> L. Festinger and J.M Carlsmith Cognitive consequences of forced compliance’ **Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology**, 44, 118-121, 1959

<sup>397</sup> Michael Russell (The Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution) **Scottish Parliament Official Report** 11 November 2009

had purchased; HS in turn wielded power through its procedures, regulations and authority over what can and cannot be done to a historic property. Money was also a factor. HS could offer a significant grant – although usually considerably less than one quarter of the total restoration costs – to help with the rebuilding, and did so in at least twenty-four cases<sup>398</sup>, for which the owners were doubtless very grateful. In some cases, such as Blackhall and Levan, the work went ahead despite an unsuccessful grant application and in others, such as Borthwick and Spedlins, the restoring owners did not even apply for a grant,<sup>399</sup> with Helen Bailey describing this as a ‘soup kitchen mentality’.<sup>400</sup> However generous it may have been financially, Historic Scotland, and its partial predecessor, the Historic Buildings Council, were not perceived as helpful and supportive by many castle restorers, although with a number of exceptions which include Kisimul, Fawside, Terpersie, Rusco and Aikwood. The owners of the last five all mention their appreciation in their narratives. On the contrary, many restorers and would-be restorers have railed at bureaucratic intransigence and occasional downright obstructiveness, and to some extent the organization has been demonized in Scotland - although perhaps not without cause.

Jamie Macnab of Savills estate agents, which regularly handles the sales of castles, said in a newspaper interview about the sale of Baltersan, “They're nicknamed 'Hysterical Scotland' up here. There are people who've been fighting for years to turn their ruins into functioning buildings because Historic Scotland like the romance of ruins, and if things are going to be restored, they'll have to be 'just so'.”<sup>401</sup> The owner of Baltersan, James Brown, wrote in a letter to The Herald:

Having spent 12 years, 12,000 hours of work and £120,000 trying to save a category A-listed tower-house, .....I have had to struggle against local and national government opposition (yes, opposition) as well as official indifference born of ignorance. In other words, I am perceived as a problem, not an opportunity, by people whose budgets and salaries come from the taxpayer. As a taxpayer, I object. As someone with a lifetime's passion for our historical architecture, I regret to say I am on the verge of giving up altogether.....At present, the eager restorer is frustrated, doubted or kept at arm's length by the very bodies charged with protecting our heritage while neglectful owners, avaricious developers and duplicitous, would-be restorers seem to get away with murdering it..... So long as we have officials who give the impression that they think a chateau is a kind of cake, then our architectural treasures will continue to crumble.<sup>402</sup>

Underpinning the clearly expressed anger and bitterness in this letter, however, is an extraordinary sense of entitlement which belies the fact that this owner had no financial resources of his own to put towards the rebuilding, and a business plan which attracted no commercial investment, despite his strenuous efforts; yet he blamed ‘the authorities’ for his lack of progress. As an owner he would be classified as an ‘unmonied dreamer’. Between the owners of ruinous buildings and those who also see themselves as their guardians, i.e. government officials, there are no clear-cut rights and wrongs or moral boundaries. In 1996 Historic Scotland

<sup>398</sup> Fawcett and Rutherford **Renewed Life for Scottish Castles**, passim

<sup>399</sup> Walker in Clow, 26

<sup>400</sup> Helen Bailey **My Love Affair with Borthwick Castle** (1988) The Book Guild Ltd, Lewes, 35

<sup>401</sup> Helen Brown ‘Wanted: Laird to take on the ultimate doer-upper’ **The Independent** March 5 2008

<sup>402</sup> James Brown ‘Why our heritage system needs an overhaul’ **The Herald** June 1 2004

was heavily criticized by the media, and to some extent by the Sheriff, for bringing a prosecution case against Chris Ruffle, the owner-restorer of Dairsie Castle, for using reconstituted stone in window surrounds when he had been refused permission to do so. This in itself was completely justifiable, but several factors appeared to the media to give Mr Ruffle the moral high ground, even if he was legally in the wrong. The newspaper *Scotland on Sunday* was very clearly on his side against Historic Scotland when it reported: "He spent more than £1m of his own money creating a brilliant reconstruction of a building which was just ruins when he started, and Historic Scotland took him to court over a minor matter."<sup>403</sup>

*The Scotsman* also wrote up the case:

Afterwards, Mr Ruffle, who bought the castle as two ruinous walls without a roof, said Historic Scotland had changed its policy in the last ten years, when many castles were rebuilt using reconstituted stone blocks. He had appealed twice and been refused permission to use the reconstituted stone, which local planners said was more durable. "It is quite strange because I was told the castle was not of historical importance, but when I began to rebuild it, it became of extreme historical importance." Dairsie Castle Trust, which before Mr Ruffle's intervention had tried to interest Historic Scotland, said yesterday its guardianship had been less than inspiring. The chairman, Mike Rankine, said: "When we put proposals to HS they were distant and obstructive. Their officials gave the impression they would rather see the castle fall into further ruin than let people do anything about it. Mr Ruffle has turned a pile of stones into one of the finest buildings in Fife. It was with great sadness the trust heard he was to be prosecuted."<sup>404</sup>

Historic Scotland, despite having right on its side, had not managed to persuade the media to support its actions, and suffered a continued series of public relations failures. An anonymous letter to the SCA Journal in 1998 expressed the kinds of frustrations which were commonly voiced between some members of the castle restoring fraternity at the time:

My experience is that there are no grants to be had for castle restoration, unless you are well connected. Despite my best efforts no public funds were used in restoring "**my Castle**". [Name removed by the Journal editor]. If you restore a listed building (or even worse, a scheduled monument) you appear to be entirely at the whim of the individual who is your local Historic Scotland inspector. Although there is a theoretical right of appeal to the Secretary of State, actually what happens is that he refers the appeal back to the very same individual in Historic Scotland who made the ruling in the first place. In effect Historic Scotland inspectors have dictatorial rights, so you better know what your individual inspector likes and dislikes at an early stage. It is very difficult for a young architect seeking to specialise in historic buildings to disagree with Historic Scotland, in that it might blight his future career. In choosing an architect, a potential restorer should consider how robust the architect is likely to be in fighting your corner against the might of Historic Scotland.<sup>405</sup>

It is clear from the extracts from the restoration narratives and interviews that the restorers of Scottish ruined castles are proud of their achievements and regard themselves as having done

<sup>403</sup> Stephen Fraser 'Heritage guardians stuck in the past?' *Scotland on Sunday* July 7 2002

<sup>404</sup> James Rougvie 'Restoration earns fine for businessman' *The Scotsman* January 12 1996

<sup>405</sup> SCA Journal 1998, 12

Scotland a good service by rescuing its historic buildings. It is also clear that among those who have a professional interest in historic buildings, particularly those who work(ed) for Historic Scotland, feelings towards restorations – or perhaps towards restorers – were equivocal. Ken Murdoch became so frustrated by the slow response of the Historic Buildings Council (HBC) to his request for planning consent for Methven Castle, which had not been answered within a year, that he wrote to Nicholas Fairbairn, MP, also a castle restorer, to complain about the HBC and said “My purpose in writing is to suggest the Historic Buildings Council requires some restructuring to make it less bureaucratic.” Nicholas Fairbairn replied that he was ‘thrilled’ by the letter “which coincides absolutely with my experience of the HBC.” He wrote to the Secretary of State on Ken Murdoch’s behalf, which brought an immediate invitation to a meeting in Edinburgh. “After a delay of a year awaiting listed building planning consent, we were given two days’ notice of this meeting. Mr Christie [secretary] started the meeting by saying he was not pleased by the letter which he had been given by the Secretary of State [meaning Ken Murdoch’s letter of complaint].”<sup>406</sup> This kind of combative approach exemplifies the ‘battles with the authorities’ which are a consistent theme in the restoration narratives in chapter five.

David Walker, former HBC Chief Inspector, credited supportive grants with huge success: “What can be said with certainty is that the HBC’s programme of grant-aid will result in there being perhaps as much as twice as many tower houses in the year 2100 (sic) than there would otherwise have been.”<sup>407</sup> This claim and its long term prediction (possibly meant to be 2010) appear to overstate the case considerably. The grants only supplied a part of the total funds needed for each project (i.e. the grant-eligible part, which did not include internal fittings or services) and were only agreed to *after* the owners had taken the risk of purchase. Not all owners applied for grants and some did so reluctantly:

Mindful of many of the problems other restorers had encountered in meeting the conditions for grant aid, we were reluctant to apply for the relatively small amount of assistance which was available at the time. In the end we realized that the conditions that would have to be met for scheduled monument consent were much the same as for grant aid. As satisfying the conditions would entail substantial additional expense, we applied for the grant as a welcome means of helping to offset the increased cost.<sup>408</sup>

Walker traced the history of grant-aid for castles:

With some 60 castles already taken into care since the passing of the Ancient Monuments Act of 1900, and estates unwilling to spend large sums on structures of no beneficial use, it had become evident that wherever practicable other solutions would have to be found for most of the other major tower houses still at risk. Thus in 1969-70 the sculptor Gerald Ogilvie Laing was given grant aid to restore the 1594 tower house at Kinkell.”<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Ken L.S. Murdoch **Methven Castle: the restoration of a seventeenth century building** (2010) no publisher given, Scotland, correspondence pages 57-59

<sup>407</sup> Walker in Clow, 29

<sup>408</sup> Coyne in Clow, 69

<sup>409</sup> Walker in Fawcett and Rutherford *Renewed Life for Scottish Castles*, 167



This account, with its clear implication that a decision had been taken to reach out and help Laing with Kinkell does not tally with Laing's own account: "I wrote to the Historic Buildings Council once more.....I told them of my plan to restore Kinkell. *They replied to the effect that they would not be willing to assist me in any way.*"<sup>410</sup> (italics added) Laing went ahead with the work on his own, not knowing the costs ahead of him and whether he would be able to afford them. Later, he tried again:

We were now well into the process of restoration. It continued to puzzle me that our application to the Historic Buildings Council for financial help had been turned down out of hand. It seemed to me that we were exactly the sort of case which they were expected to assist – private individuals of limited means doing their best to restore a building of historical interest without any commercial gain in view. Though the Council is composed of a group of people interested in architecture it is administered on a day-to-day basis by career bureaucrats. I suspected that one of them, unaware of the quality of Kinkell and evidently ignorant on the subject of Scottish architecture, had been instrumental in rejecting our case.<sup>411</sup>

Whether or not Laing was correct in his assumption he found a way around the problem by phoning Lord Cawdor, then chairman of the HBC and also a neighbour, and inviting him to visit Kinkell. "Within a couple of weeks he visited the site and was impressed by the amount of work we had done in so short a time. Subsequently the Council agreed to help us to the tune of £4000."<sup>412</sup> This does not reflect well on the HBC, but Laing's experiences chime with ours; we were continually fobbed off by administrative assistants when we tried to contact HS about applying for a grant for Barholm, and unfortunately had no aristocratic connections to help us. Persistence paid off in the end, but it was a long and frustrating struggle even to be allowed to apply for a grant, and we were told categorically that we would not be successful (we were).

There is one fundamental question which underpins some of the tension between owners and Historic Scotland: is restoration the right thing to do with a ruined historic building? As was discussed in chapter two, there is ideological disagreement among architects, campaigners and would-be restorers over this issue, with the SPAB position still cleaving to the words of William Morris:

But those who make the changes wrought in our day under the name of Restoration, while professing to bring back a building to the best time of its history, have no guide but each his own individual whim to point out to them what is admirable and what contemptible; while the very nature of their task compels them to destroy something and to supply the gap by imagining what the earlier builders should or might have done. Moreover, in the course of this double process of destruction and addition, the whole surface of the building is necessarily tampered with; so that the appearance of antiquity is taken away from such old parts of the fabric as are left, and there is no

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<sup>410</sup> Laing, 87

<sup>411</sup> Laing 120-121

<sup>412</sup> Laing, 121

laying to rest in the spectator the suspicion of what may have been lost; and in short, a feeble and lifeless forgery is the final result of all the wasted labour.<sup>413</sup>

Some of the restorations of Scottish castles described in this thesis have undoubtedly been done on 'individual whim' and with little more than a nod to historical authenticity. Although most owners have claimed to be wedded to the ideal of 'authenticity' (even if their ideas of what that might constitute were completely mistaken), a few have simply done as they wished with their buildings, to make their fantasy idea of 'castle' a reality. Examples would be Gordon Millar of Torwood, Frank Renwick of Ravenstone, and Neil and Mary Blackburn of Fernie Castle. Some 'restorations' seriously compromised the integrity of historic buildings, and/or were carried out by owners who took a deliberately anti-authoritarian stance and flaunted it, so that one can understand the dismay and anger of Historic Scotland officials, who are, one must presume, motivated to work there because of an interest in caring for historic buildings. Peter Hewkin, who bought Craigmornie Castle in a derelict state in 1996, was one such owner whose project was nonetheless reported in admiring tones by the Daily Telegraph:

In the opinion of Historic Scotland's experts, the castle would cost about £1.5 million to restore; a sum that far outstripped its value, even as a finished home. Mr Hewkin knew, however, that this estimate derived from the experience of conservation architects who used rare materials and original techniques for their immaculate reproductions. He also knew that it was based on using building firms that specialised in grant-aided projects which could be priced as if they were insurance jobs. But he was not part of this world and he had his own ideas. "I'd done up every house I'd lived in," he explains. "Although I'd never worked on such a scale, I knew how to source materials and labour, how to find the best solutions and how to oversee a project." He planned to treat the restoration as anything but an academic exercise. The castle, when reborn, would be structurally sound and it would look aesthetically convincing, but the materials and skills employed would not necessarily be those available a century and a half ago. So plasterboard was used in place of lathe and plaster and the convincing stonework in the hall is actually lime render mixed with white cement and scored to resemble sandstone blocks. Fire-doors were replaced, in appropriately Gothic style, by a creative local chippie.

The words 'anything but an academic exercise' are telling. A number of owners carried out their restorations without an architect, or with minimal support from an inexperienced student of architecture (e.g. Fawside), sometimes for reasons of cost, but sometimes because of a belief that the owners should be in control and not be dictated to by experts. John Coyne, who restored Tilquhillie Castle, wrote: "Although the advice of experts is invaluable, one should never give up direct control. The restoration of a castle is much too important to leave to the professionals, no matter how well-intentioned."<sup>414</sup> (He did, however, use an experienced conservation architect, France Smoor, in his project). There was an entrenched 'them and us' atmosphere among some Scottish castle owners and an antagonistic stance towards owners on the part of some HS officials in the 1980s and 90s, both of which were understandable, particularly in terms of the lack of

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<sup>413</sup> William Morris (1877) **The SPAB manifesto**: <http://www.spab.org.uk/what-is-spab/the-manifesto/>

<sup>414</sup> Coyne in Clow, 69

information available and the poor communication in the days before the Internet enabled organisations to become more readily transparent, and in the context of the encouragement of entrenched positions by the newspaper media. Referring to Kirkhope, “Mr Clarke reflected that the restoration “served as a cameo of what is so difficult about much of Scotland. We spent 10 years filling in forms to get the necessary permissions – doing the physical work took us only four months.””<sup>415</sup> Another letter to the SCA Newsletter complained about the complex and expensive procedures which had to be completed before even making an application, which could in any case easily be rejected:

Before being allowed to apply for a restoration grant one has to apply for permission to apply. This involves a considerable amount of work and it is necessary to divulge a large amount of personal information. Historic Scotland then make a decision as to whether they will entertain an application for grant aid. Having crossed this hurdle one then makes an application, normally with a great deal of assistance from architects and quantity surveyors. It will not surprise members that this assistance has to be paid for.....We are dealing with public servants who have in their charge public funds. They are accountable to all of us, castle owners and non-owners alike. Their actions should be transparent and the reasons for their actions should be explained in terms of public policy.<sup>416</sup>

These are the issues – lack of accountability, transparency and flexibility – which prompted Michael Russell, SNP Scottish Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution, to attempt to introduce a new working culture into the organization in 2009: “Historic Scotland involves people with tremendous ability and tremendous enthusiasm. We need to make that organization and those in it more flexible and more open; we need to make the organization more easily accessed; and we need to make its culture more outward looking.”<sup>417</sup> He went on, later: “I am determined that, while I am responsible for my post, Historic Scotland will be much more positive and helpful. Indeed, it is already being so.” In response to the Minister’s encouragement, Historic Scotland launched the *Scottish Castles Initiative* in 2009, whereby they put on the Internet a list of potentially restorable castles and an encouraging message to potential restorers:

There is a long tradition of successful castle and tower house restoration in Scotland as seen at Duart Castle which was restored in the early 20th century and Fenton Tower in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Restoration projects are by their nature likely to be complex and restoration will not be an appropriate course of action in every case. However Historic Scotland believes that there is potential for more and this initiative is intended to make the process of taking forward restoration projects more straightforward and transparent. The Scottish Castle initiative is designed to encourage investment in this aspect of Scotland’s built heritage by providing advice on processes and best practices, and by offering exemplars of successful past projects.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> No byline ‘Historic Tower goes on the market’ **Southern Reporter** 2 June 2005

<sup>416</sup> SCA Journal 1999, 13

<sup>417</sup> Scottish parliament proceedings op cit

<sup>418</sup> Historic Scotland website, Scottish Castles Initiative page: <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/scottishcastleinitiative/aboutscottishcastleinitiative.htm> accessed October 2010



FIGURE 42 LEX BROWN OUTSIDE CASTLE TIORAM<sup>419</sup>

Yet despite all party backing and its current overt encouragement of new restoration projects, Historic Scotland is obliged to work within the framework of the Venice Charter and all of the subsequent European conservation agreements; it used these as justification for refusing permission for the de-scheduling and re-building of Castle Tioram. The very public clashes between HS and the owner of Castle Tioram, Lex Brown, have divided communities between those who support his plans for a rebuilding of the castle to provide living accommodation and those who believe that it should be left as a consolidated ruin; the divisions crossed party political boundaries and aroused fury among Brown's many high profile supporters, such as Ranald McDonald, chief of Clan Macdonald of Clanranald (of which Castle Tioram is the traditional seat). In an article in *The Scotsman* in 2004, entitled *High time to demolish the ruin that is Historic Scotland*, Gerald Warner wrote a vitriolic article against "the Jobsworths and olde worlde Luddites whose pedantic tyranny has made Historic Scotland an object of loathing to everyone who has the conservation interests of our heritage at heart." He went on to articulate an overtly anti-SPAB view of conservation: "It is a doctrinaire view that the landscape should be ornamented with ivy-clad ruins, in the style of 19th-century illustrations of the Waverley novels, rather than with accurately restored heritage. It is the mentality of those who, two centuries ago, built follies on their estates and employed bogus hermits to inhabit them."<sup>420</sup> The media was overwhelmingly supportive of Lex Brown; Warner's views were echoed in numerous newspaper articles, particularly in *The Scotsman*, with titles such as: "MSPs join battle to turn ruined 14th-century castle into a home" (*The Scotsman* October 6, 2006); "Clan chief hits out at impasse on west castle" (*Aberdeen Press and Journal*, October 14, 2006); "Hysteric Scotland? Planning quango's competence is called into question" (*The Scotsman* December 20, 2007); "Tioram is a castle worthy of regeneration" (*The Glasgow Herald* April 3, 2008). But Muriel Gray struck an unusually dissident note in *The Sunday Herald*, in which she argues that Castle Tioram should **not** be restored: "... reconstructions are very nearly always utter crap in comparison to the very

<sup>419</sup> *The Glasgow Herald Magazine* 13 November 2004

<sup>420</sup> Gerald Warner 'High time to demolish the ruin that is Historic Scotland' 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2004 *The Scotsman*

personal experience an engaged viewer can enjoy when given information, the object, and the space to contemplate both. One can't help thinking this truth also applies to Castle Tioram."<sup>421</sup> The Tioram controversy has shone a spotlight on the ideological differences in the heritage debate and also on the uneasy relationship between Historic Scotland and the citizens of Scotland; the former may have won the battle over Tioram, at least for the present, but in the war with the media, unfortunately, they are the losers. In reply to a question about Castle Tioram in the Scottish parliament in November 2009 Mike Russell gave the following conciliatory answer :

It is important to recognise that when decisions are made, they are decisions for that time and within the policy. The opportunity to make new applications always exists. I am certainly happy to say that if Castle Tioram's owner wishes to make a new application, Historic Scotland will work with that owner to consider what is possible. Not everything is possible and not every individual owner's requirements can be met, but the challenge that Historic Scotland and we as a nation face is a large one.

As at June 2011, however, the HS website stated: "There is currently no application for scheduled monument consent for Castle Tioram with Historic Scotland."<sup>422</sup>

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### WHAT WILL THE NEIGHBOURS THINK?

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So finally, after 35 months, the scaffolding has been removed from the castle of Kilcoe. And just as when an old master is restored -- the layers of lacquer and years of grime cleaned off to expose the original brilliance of the colours -- there are people who look at it and say: "I prefer it as it was." And despite the investment of time, money and effort that I have put into this great piece of Irish heritage -- without, it must be said, either grants or tax breaks -- I partially agree.<sup>423</sup>



FIGURE 43 KILCOE CASTLE, BEFORE AND AFTER

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<sup>421</sup> Muriel Gray 'Let's avoid making monumental disasters' **The Sunday Herald** 4 November 2001

<sup>422</sup> <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/news/indepth/castletioram.htm>

<sup>423</sup> Jeremy Irons 'Let's Bring A Bit of Warmth To West Cork' 30 May 2001 **The Irish Times**

When a ruinous building is rebuilt, the effects ripple out across the wider community. Jeremy Irons hit problems in the local community, when he rendered Kilcoe Castle, in Ireland, in a rust colour after reoccupying the building. He had originally decided to keep the bare stone finish, but was forced to apply the render when it became obvious that water penetration through the walls of his new home could not be prevented otherwise. The naked stone was perceived as being more natural and in keeping with the landscape.

My neighbour James who has supported my endeavours through thick and thin, doesn't like the colour, but has the good grace to see it as my affair. I hope, though, that he and the many others who have supported so steadfastly my endeavours with the castle and who now feel dismay at the sight of its fruits, will, in time, grow used to Kilcoe's new raiment. Time and the elements will work their unstoppable magic, and just as my mother's new hairdo always looked better the day after it was done, so the castle will look better tomorrow. Change is something I find difficult as the next man and there's no doubt Kilcoe has changed. But it has also renewed itself and, like much of Ireland, become forward-looking and proud of itself.

Jeremy Irons' neighbour may have viewed the colour of Kilcoe's render as a private matter, but in reality, significant changes in large historic buildings in the landscape are of public concern, as they change the environment for all of those in the neighbourhood. After the harling of Law Castle in Ayrshire, local feeling was offended: "A neighbour, who asked not to be named, said Mr. Phillips had wrought havoc. "He has absolutely ruined what was a lovely old stone castle. It was a work of art, with beautiful stonework that had been there for 500 years, then he came along and roughcast every inch of it.""<sup>424</sup> This anti-harling attitude is hardly surprising; knowledge of harling is privileged information, accessible only to those with an understanding of the historical antecedents. In the popular perception it is just wrong. Even Robert Lorimer, who must have known that harling was authentic, removed it from Earlshall when he was commissioned to restore it.<sup>425</sup> Only about half of the restored castles were harled and the majority of those were completed in the second half of the period, after 1975, when a clearer understanding of the practical benefits of harling (i.e. waterproofing and weatherproofing), as well as its historical authenticity, became more widely known. Admiration of 'bare' stone has persisted, however, and even some buildings which were harled externally were left with unplastered interiors, which were seen as being more authentic. Randal MacInnes examined the meaning of rubble, or unadorned stone, in nineteenth and twentieth century Scottish architecture in a paper entitled '*Rubblemania: Ethic and Aesthetic in Scottish Architecture*':

Rubble has tended to signal 'historic' Scots culture in a way which, conscious of its 'Scottishness', asserts itself in a manner which emphasizes *naïveté*, homeliness or simplicity. This is a view of Scottish architecture constructed during the post-'North Britain' period when the country's

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<sup>424</sup> Lorna Martin 'Father, daughter hunted by heritage watchdog' August 10, 2002, **The Herald (Glasgow)**

<sup>425</sup> John Gifford **The Buildings of Scotland. Fife** (1988) Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 199



rebellious past was at a safe distance. Rubble also has become a sign for 'heritage', an appropriate emblem for tourist-orientated buildings.<sup>426</sup>

Fernie Castle in Fife has been run as a hotel for many years and specialises in weddings, the current owner, in the words of an admiring guest, "making a considerable effort to enhance the castle "feel" of the hotel by painting a stone motif on the interior walls and removing the stucco-like harling from the majority of the castle's exterior."<sup>427</sup>



FIGURE 44 FERNIE CASTLE BEDROOM WITH FAUX RUBBLE WALLS

In Spain, Matthew Parris was reluctant to plaster the exterior of L'Avenc (and finally did not do so): "An architectural historian points out small patches of primitive plaster clinging to the external stone. A grand house like this, he says, will have been plastered. Almost disappointing – the warm, rough stone was what first drew me to l'Avenc."<sup>428</sup>

Marigold MacRae, whose husband's grandfather restored Eilean Donan just after the First World War, told the SCOTS Magazine with airy dismissiveness: "Of course, there were one or two people, back in the 1920s, who grumbled to the newspapers complaining that the MacRaes were spoiling this picturesque old ruin with all their restoration. But all that's forgotten now and I think most people love what's been done."<sup>429</sup> She is correct in a sense, in that the majority of visitors to Eilean Donan, the most popular iconic Scottish castle in terms of published imagery, are probably unconcerned about the rebuilding history and simply admire it uncritically. They would also love the story which the Marigold MacRae relates about the castle's restoration:

<sup>426</sup> Ranald MacInnes "Rubblemania': Ethic and Aesthetic in Scottish Architecture' **Journal of Design History** Vol 9 No 3 1996

<sup>427</sup> <http://www.travellady.com/Issues/September04/994ADistantCastle.htm> accessed September 2010

<sup>428</sup> Parris, 105

<sup>429</sup> Susan Cromarty 'Castle of Dreams' **SCOTS Magazine** February 1999

Farquar MacRae was a highly skilled stone mason and he was employed initially only to clean up the site. But when my husband's grandfather came home from the First World War he found that Farquar had gone much further than simply cleaning up a bit. He was all set to re-build. He claimed to have had a dream in which he said he saw, in the most vivid detail, exactly the way the castle originally looked. Fortunately, Colonel MacRae Gilstrap married a very rich lady, Ella Gilstrap, and luckily, she was as enthusiastic as he was. So, with her money and their combined enthusiasm they rebuilt the castle over 12 years between 1920 and 1932. The extraordinary thing is that after the restoration was completed, the plans for the castle were discovered in the archives of Edinburgh Castle and lo-and-behold, they were exactly as Farquar had dreamed them to be. That is why Eilean Donan is known as The Castle of Dreams.”<sup>430</sup>

But although this is a rather charming romantic myth, in Walker’s view the ‘dream’ restoration, by George Mackie Watson, was not convincingly authentic. Additionally, “a small-arched hump-backed bridge radically changed and falsified the original concept of the place.”<sup>431</sup>



FIGURE 45 EILEAN DONAN CASTLE<sup>432</sup>

Authenticity is a concept which exercises most restoring owners, but few have gone in its pursuit to the lengths of Gerald Laing, who demolished a substantial eighteenth century extension at Kinkell. “I suggested my idea of demolishing the extension to the others. They thought I was out of my mind. This hardened my resolve. I suggested it to the architect on one of his occasional visits. He thought I was out of my mind and added that it would diminish the value of the building.”<sup>433</sup> Laing carried out his demolition in the interest of what he saw as ‘purity’; other restorers also demolished extensions, such as those at Lanton Tower and Methven, but for more pragmatic reasons.

We had little idea about the way our activities were regarded by the rest of the local population, although they were never less than friendly and helpful. We knew that we were the subject of a certain amount of speculation<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> *ibid*

<sup>431</sup> Walker in Clow, 16

<sup>432</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eilean\\_Donan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eilean_Donan) accessed March 2011

<sup>433</sup> Laing, *Kinkell*, 123

<sup>434</sup> Laing, 95



In Spain, Matthew Parris initially thought that his neighbours did not know or care about l'Avenc, but found that he was wrong:

People in the area had turned their eyes from l'Avenc, not because nobody cared, but because its dilapidation was so sad. The house seemed to have gone beyond the point where any owner was likely to find the resources to rescue it. Now that the unlikely had happened there was a tremendous upsurge of local interest, most of it sympathetic, some of it rather anxious.<sup>435</sup>

Parris and his family had a constant stream of visitors from the local community during the restoration, curious about the process and outcomes. L'Avenc became the end point of a favourite Sunday afternoon walk for the nearby villagers, so that people could inspect the progress and ask questions of the restorers. While neighbours may be pleased to see a dilapidated building 'rescued', in some communities there is serious opposition to restoration. Helen Bailey, in her account of the restoration of Borthwick Castle, reported: "The most unpleasant of my recollections was the grief resulting from the initial hostility of my neighbours"<sup>436</sup> She suffered the trauma of having her water supply cut off by a neighbour, as did Matthew Parris in Spain, who finally instituted a prolonged and ultimately unsuccessful legal battle to regain it. In the village of Portencross in Ayrshire, residents formed the campaigning group Friends of Portencross (FOPC) when the ruined Portencross Castle was put up for sale by BNFL in 1998. They fought a vigorous and finally successful campaign against the sale of the castle to an individual buyer and were forthright in the expression of their fears:

"Last weekend, I met an 84-year-old lady sitting on a chair in the car park just enjoying the scenery because she had been coming to this spot since she was a little girl.....Our concern is that all that will end if it is bought as private property by some individual whose ego demands he puts up fences to keep the public out."<sup>437</sup>

Others, feared Mr Proven, might want to make it into a holiday home "and play lord of the manor, coming across from time to time to see how the serfs are getting on".<sup>438</sup>

In 2007, when it seemed that Dumfries House and its contents might be sold off to private individual(s), an entry on the website of the Scotsman newspaper *Drive to save Dumfries House for Nation* comments section read: "If it's a National Treasure, it's OORS!!! Hands off!!"<sup>439</sup> These three media quotes illustrate the negative attitudes that exist in Scotland towards private ownership of property which is popularly perceived to be 'public' heritage; they are in stark contrast to the 'property pornography' of glossy magazines, television makeover programmes and newspaper property pages which invariably describe private restorations in glowing terms. They also do not fit with the assumption on the part of stately homeowners that paying visitors like to see evidence of personal items of the family living at the property, discussed in chapter one. Clare

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<sup>435</sup> Parris, 119

<sup>436</sup> Bailey, 244

<sup>437</sup> Jennifer Cunningham 'For Portencross's regal gem, moral blackmail may not be enough to counter commercial expediency; stronghold of ancient values' **The Glasgow Herald** 18 May 1998

<sup>438</sup> Raymond Duncan 'Queues form to buy Scots castles' **The Glasgow Herald** 27 August 1998

<sup>439</sup> <http://news.scotsman.com/scotland/> accessed 27<sup>th</sup> April 2007

Russell Macpherson-Grant of Ballindalloch Castle, which has been lived in continuously since 1546 by the same family, claimed in a newspaper interview that the castle visitor surveys “always show that it is the fact that the castle is lived in by a family that is most prized.”<sup>440</sup> The competing representations of heritage in Scotland – i.e. that it is part of the common good, as opposed to being lovingly cared for under the continuous guardianship of old landowning families – reflect differing attitudes that are class based and politically informed. Scotland is different from England in its anti-Conservative/Establishment views in this respect, particularly over the period since WW2; McCrone described the “growing divergence between electoral behaviour in Scotland and England, and the emergence of an alternative political agenda north of the border.”<sup>441</sup> In statistical terms, the Conservative share of the vote in Scotland dropped from 41% in 1945 to 17% in 1997 (the year in which all Conservative seats were lost), while the SNP vote grew (erratically) from 1.2% to 22.1%, demonstrating a growing interest in nationalist politics and policies, and, it seems, a growing sense of entitlement to a common share in the country’s heritage.

When Ann Gloag, very wealthy owner of Kinfauns Castle, successfully applied to restrict the ‘right to roam’ legislation by building a two metre high perimeter fence in 2006, the decision was immediately challenged by the Ramblers Association, which lost the court case. The ideological debate about land reform and the ‘right to roam’ is highly politically charged in Scotland; in this case the Sunday Times came down on the side of the landowner, citing the politics of envy:

When she bought Beaufort Castle in Inverness-shire, the resentment was so great, she thought about moving to England.....It sometimes appears that we would rather have anybody - Russian oligarchs, porn magnates, Hollywood starlets - buy our castles as second homes than see them go to an ordinary Scot who has made a groat or two..... Her wealth does not lead to anybody else's poverty. When the politics of envy take precedence, as they still do in Scotland, this message is completely drowned out.<sup>442</sup>

However, in Ireland, James Charles Roy, who restored Moyode Castle over a long period of years on a very restricted budget, found his Irish neighbours treated him with acceptance and even kindness, even though they usually addressed him ironically as ‘your highness’.

The Irish have a charming trait of accepting people on pretty much their own terms. If you come laden with gold and buy every round of an evening, you’re a grand lad indeed. Likewise if you’re without tuppence in your pocket and just hang around the neighbourhood drinking everyone’s tea and eating their brown bread, still the word “champion” follows you out the door..... I was greeted with undeniable warmth of feeling. To my discredit, I also found that people had hoarded their old blankets and pillows, even unwanted canned goods, to pass along to their American “itinerant”.<sup>443</sup>

Overall, it seems that neighbourly welcomes or hostility are dependent on whether the neighbours see the restoration as a threat, representing a diminishment of their enjoyment of the

<sup>440</sup> Jennifer Cunningham ‘The keepers of our castles’ **The Glasgow Herald** 27 February 2004

<sup>441</sup> McCrone **Sociology**, 104

<sup>442</sup> Gillian Bowditch ‘What have we got against the rich?’ **The Sunday Times** 17 June 2007

<sup>443</sup> Roy, 62

environment, or as a curiosity, or even a positive addition to the community. The personality, determination and public standing of the restoring owner, to some extent, have an effect on the way in which their neighbours perceive the project, as was shown in table 3, the systems model in chapter three. Helen Bailey managed to win round her most hostile neighbour by inviting him to the restored castle and charming and reassuring him, but not without a very public battle beforehand: "For several days he and I battled it out in the correspondence column of the newspaper [The Scotsman]. I did my best to counter rumour and suspicion by setting out the facts as they were. But the odds were heavily on his side. He was known and rightly respected. I was the unknown invader of their territory."<sup>444</sup> The use of newspaper columns by Borthwick's detractor led to a satisfactory outcome, but an unhappy neighbour of Sundrum Castle could only vent her spleen in a letter to the *Glasgow Herald* after the event:

Using the concept of an "enabling" permission, South Ayrshire Council agreed to allow the building of well over 30 new houses along this single-track cul-de-sac. This required the felling of mature woodland, destruction of all wildlife corridors and loss of amenity for all local residents and the adjacent holiday park. This was supposed to "enable" the original developer to restore Sundrum Castle and thus preserve it for future generations.

He was also given (pounds) 500,000 of public money from Historic Scotland to facilitate this and promptly split the castle into three apartments, sold them and departed laughing all the way to the bank, having first converted several adjoining stables, mews and coach houses into private houses. The remaining plots have been sold off piecemeal to other developers solely for private profit and no-one who hasn't seen it for themselves (the councillors haven't) could believe what is happening as a result. No consideration whatsoever has been given to the questions of access to sites and workforce parking, traffic flow, pedestrians, complete lack of services or access for emergency vehicles.<sup>445</sup>

If all of the above accusations are true, it is hardly surprising that the neighbours were opposed to the restoration of Sundrum Castle. Sometimes, complaints by neighbours are justified; sometimes they are effective and sometimes not.

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## CHANGES IN THE LANDSCAPE

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The gardens and grounds will be landscaped in period style and maintained to very high standards. Fresh, organic flowers, fruit and vegetables will be made available to guests for their use during their stay. Honey and Free-range eggs will be produced from Baltersan's own bee skeps and poultry.<sup>446</sup>

In a paper developed from *The Scottish Chateau* Charles McKean addressed the question of the landscape which originally surrounded Scottish towers and castles and described how they would have been enclosed by a series of walls which would provide protection from the wind and create a micro-climate suitable for growing all sorts of fruit and vegetables, even exotic ones. "Vast

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<sup>444</sup> Bailey, 30

<sup>445</sup> Rosemary Sloan "The sorry Sundrum tale began 12 years ago' **The Glasgow Herald** 5 May 2004

<sup>446</sup> [www.baltersan.com](http://www.baltersan.com) accessed March 2008; no longer available May 2011

numbers [of lairds] must have dined well on home-produced artichokes, melons, asparagus, peaches and even fresh grapes".<sup>447</sup> Some restored castles have brought their gardens back to the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century enclosed privy gardens – e.g. Liberton House and Ochiltree. Only a few restored castles have a walled garden, among them Pitcullo, Liberton House, Barholm, Midmar, Ochiltree, Spedlins and Glenapp, all of which are maintained, although not necessarily in sixteenth century style. The Castle of Mey is one of the most northerly castles in Scotland:

"This romantic and unique garden is a reminder that, however daunting the weather, it is possible to create and maintain a successful garden. The castle kitchen benefitted from the wide variety of fruit and vegetables grown here, all chosen for their resistance to wind and sea spray. Raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries, apples, currants, potatoes, peas, beans, carrots, turnips, onions and leeks all thrive here and, for some unknown reason, the exotic artichoke does extremely well, too!"<sup>448</sup>



FIGURE 46 POTAGER IN THE WALLED GARDEN OF LIBERTON HOUSE, 2010<sup>449</sup>

The land surrounding castles also shifted, as ruinous towers were sold by landowners with only a small package of the land in which they once would have stood – constituting a garden, rather than an estate. The outbuildings and walled enclosures which once would have surrounded them have nearly all disappeared and many towers are left to stick up in solitary splendor in fields, in a way which is quite unlike their original position. Subsequent owners sometimes sought to buy back enough land to situate their castle within a larger acreage, for example Robert Clow of Aiket Castle in Ayrshire<sup>450</sup> and Sue and Ian Brash of Fawside near Edinburgh<sup>451</sup>. The owner of Niddrie

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<sup>447</sup> Charles McKean 'The Scottish Renaissance Country Seat In Its Setting' **Garden History** 31 (2003), 141-162

<sup>448</sup> **The Castle and Gardens of Mey** (2003) Heritage House Group Ltd, Derby, 60-61

<sup>449</sup> Author

<sup>450</sup> Robert Clow 'Aiket Castle' in Clow (ed.) **Restoring Scotland's Castles**, 109

<sup>451</sup> Personal communication Sue Brash

Castle has tried to buy the castle's walled garden from the estate in which it stands, but has not been successful.<sup>452</sup>

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## BUILDINGS AS BUSINESSES

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The truth is that the architecture of a nation not only reflects the broad lines of its history, but also its changing habits and power of satisfying new needs. By these changes it advances and apart from them it cannot profitably be studied.<sup>453</sup>

Sir John Stirling Maxwell's words, written in 1932, seem prescient. The castles of Scotland may not seem the most dynamic or flexible of building forms, but they have had to change and adapt to new needs and circumstances in the decades since WW2, and must be viewed in the twenty-first century within the context of these new needs and circumstances. "Castles have become a business. They lure and beckon tourists with reenactments around the walls, banquets in the ancient halls and tea and souvenirs in the stables.... The castle has had a remarkable afterlife."<sup>454</sup>

One of the biggest changes in the 'afterlife' has been the number of castles offering not only tea in the stables, but overnight accommodation to paying guests; 150 such castles have been identified (see appendix 6 for full list) of which perhaps scarcely a dozen were hotels before WW2. Along with the commercialization and commodification of the Scottish castle, has come a sort of democratization. Today there is widespread public access, not only to the ruined castles of Scotland, but also to the furnished apartments of those which are maintained as houses and hotels. Members of the paying public are increasingly seen as guests, rather than just day-tripping visitors. Castle owners have exploited the commercial possibilities of their properties. The Scottish castles which offer accommodation market themselves as hotels, bed and breakfast establishments, self-catering facilities or exclusive use with catering. The vast majority have entered the tourist accommodation market only at the end of the twentieth century. Over 150 privately owned castles also currently advertise weddings, which became an attractive proposition for many castles after a change in the law in 2002, allowing civil marriages to take place in venues other than registry offices<sup>455</sup>. The numbers became extraordinarily high in such a short period. Clearly, there was a perception that weddings are a good commercial prospect. Some castles claim to have private chapels, such as Balgonie and Forter, and these are exploited in their advertisements. Additionally, Historic Scotland offers twelve castle venues for weddings, including Edinburgh, Stirling and Urquhart Castles. The National Trust for Scotland has eight castles which cater for weddings and on its website explicitly acknowledges the democratizing changes in their properties:

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<sup>452</sup> Personal communication Richard Nairn

<sup>453</sup> Sir John Stirling Maxwell **Shrines and Homes of Scotland** (1938) Alexander MacLehose and Co.,2

<sup>454</sup> Marilyn Stokstad **Medieval Castles** (2005) Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 92

<sup>455</sup> The Marriage (Approval of Places) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 (S.S.I. 2002 No. 260) were approved by the Scottish Parliament on 28 May 2002 and came into force on 10 June 2002.

For centuries the National Trust for Scotland's properties have played host to magnificent banquets and dances for the rich and famous. Today these wonderful venues are open for all to enjoy and are available to you for private hire. With an inspiring collection of castles, stately homes and gardens, situated in both city centre and countryside locations, the Trust has a venue to accommodate any size or style of wedding.<sup>456</sup>

A number of agencies which specialize in holiday accommodation in (Scottish) castles have websites on the Internet, for example Celtic Castles.<sup>457</sup> 'Stay in a Scottish Castle' is an invitation which many tourists are taking up; anyone can be a 'laird for a night' in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Of the 43 castles offering self-catering accommodation, fourteen have been restored from a ruinous or abandoned condition and one (Easterheughs) built from scratch, representing over one third of the self-catering establishments. The majority are small, mostly sleeping fewer than 12. Two of the restored self-catering castles belong to the Landmark Trust (Castle of Park in Wigtownshire and Saddell Castle in Kintyre) and two to the Vivat Trust (Barns Tower in Peebles and Tower of Hallbar in Renfrewshire). The aim of these charities is to save interesting historic buildings at risk and restore them for holiday letting, so that as many people as possible can enjoy the buildings at an intimate level. The Vivat Trust is currently planning the restoration of Earlstoun Castle, another small, ruinous building, near Loch Ken in south west Scotland.<sup>458</sup> Some larger castles advertise accommodation for catered groups; they very often function as shooting lodges and may have been built as such. Of the restored castles, only Ackergill, Castle Stuart and Fenton fit in this category. In addition to offering accommodation, Fenton Tower was used as the location for 'Archie's Castle' in the children's television series *Balamory* from 2002–5. Hotels are often baronial mansions built in the Victorian era, capitalizing on the cachet of the Castle name, such as Glenapp and Duncraig. The use of castles for commercial enterprises that involve inviting the paying public into the castle *because it is a castle* provides a strong motivation for owners to keep both the interior and exterior as 'authentic-looking' as possible, since that is what people want and expect when they book into a castle hotel or pay to take the family around a stately home. Fixtures and fittings must at least look old.

Sadly, not all commercial development is good. Binney and Watson-Smythe warned of the problems of turning historic buildings over to institutional use:

Experience shows that most forms of institutional use follow a remarkably clear pattern. First, the institution needs more floor space and begins to build in the grounds. The earliest extensions or additions may be discreetly sited and carefully designed, but very quickly the hut syndrome is underway and the house is rapidly surrounded by one- or two-storey flat-roofed extensions of the very utilitarian kind mercilessly caricatured by Osbert Lancaster. Then, with dramatic abruptness, a decision is taken to close the institution or move on..... Again and again users, after a period of

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<sup>456</sup> [http://scottishweddingvisitscotland.com/national\\_trust](http://scottishweddingvisitscotland.com/national_trust) accessed November 2010

<sup>457</sup> [www.celticcastles.com](http://www.celticcastles.com)

<sup>458</sup> [http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/scottishcastleinitiative/castleconservationregistersearch/castleconservationregister-summary.htm?ccr=3264&searchBox\\_Keyword=&searchBox\\_CouncilArea=&page=](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/scottishcastleinitiative/castleconservationregistersearch/castleconservationregister-summary.htm?ccr=3264&searchBox_Keyword=&searchBox_CouncilArea=&page=) accessed June 2011

about fifteen years, suddenly decide to leave. Many of these houses have reached the point where further extensions would completely overwhelm them. The challenge then is to find a new use which will not only secure the future of the house but undo some of the damage that has been done.<sup>459</sup>

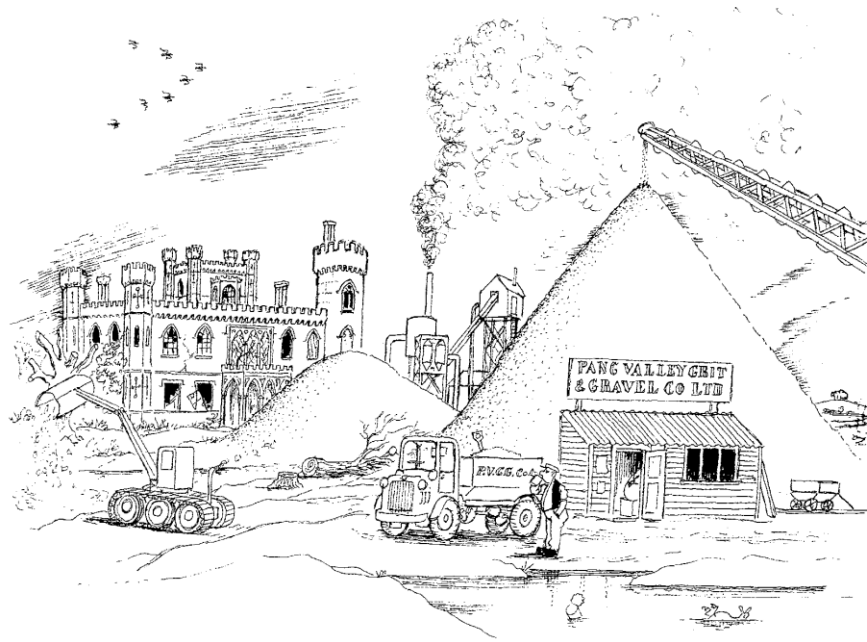


FIGURE 47 'CROCHET CASTLE' BY OSBERT LANCASTER<sup>460</sup>

Dun Craig Castle, partially restored 2003 - 9, had been used as a local authority domestic science college before being abandoned in 1989 and perfectly fits the description above. Equally, the 'enabling development' mentioned in chapter three, when new housing is allowed within policies to 'enable' the restoration of a historic building – such as Gogar Castle in Edinburgh and Sundrum Castle in Ayrshire – can destroy the integrity of a castle's surroundings. Sometimes, too, unscrupulous or unlucky developers deliver the new housing but fail to bring the historic restoration to completion. For example, the owner of Rowallan Castle, which is under the guardianship of Historic Scotland, has been refused permission to restore the building, but while

<sup>459</sup> Marcus Binney and Marianne Watson-Smyth **SAVE Britain's Heritage Action Guide**, (1991) Collins and Brown Ltd, London, 54

<sup>460</sup> James Knox **Cartoons and Coronets. The Genius of Osbert Lancaster**, 114

campaigning to be allowed to do so, built a golf course and opened a club house on the land surrounding it; also, some new houses have been built on land which was sold off.<sup>461</sup>

At face value, it is the imperative of economics and the need to finance the upkeep of the castles that has been responsible for their increasing commercialisation. Yet this simple analysis masks the enormous social changes which have led castle owners to seek ways and means of gaining income from the buildings. Castles and towers, both ruined and occupied, have been part of the Scottish landscape for hundreds of years, but the major difference is that it is only within the past fifty years or so that the buildings themselves have been used to earn money – previously, most were situated on an estate that generated the income for the castle. HS and the NTS, as guardians of historic buildings, have had their funding squeezed in recent years and been forced to recognise market forces and offer weddings and jousting tournaments; building trusts have sprung up in response to the perceived threat to the heritage of historic buildings as old owners have – not always, but often – become less able to maintain them due to increasing costs; and relatively impecunious new owners have bought ruined castles and towers from old landowners and had to turn to commerce to be able to continue to own the buildings.

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### SELLING ON

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Castles for sale attract a peculiar cross-section of people. From impulsive entertainers with improbable suntans to earnest, conservative-minded businessmen in suits; from ruthless international hotel chains to cash rich single ladies with a whiff of crime about them; from self-made millionaires with ponytails and gold jewelry to complete dreamers.<sup>462</sup>

Sales of castles, including those restored, rose steadily between 1945 and 2010; like restorations, sales of castles before 1945 were not uncommon, but they were sporadic and usually took place within a closed group of existing landowners, with occasional incursions by the nouveaux riches – for example, the sale of Earlshall in Fife to the bleach merchant R.W. McKenzie in 1891. After 1945, the commodification of Scottish castles took off and ‘a peculiar cross-section of people’, such as Browne described, began to buy castles. These included the entertainer Billy Connolly, the politician David Steel and the entrepreneur Anita Roddick, along with many new owners with no particular claim to fame and no previous connections to landed estates or castles. In 2002, the singer Michael Jackson was reported to be in a celebrity bidding war with singer Madonna and golfer Nick Faldo over Amhuinnsuidhe Castle,<sup>463</sup> although none of the three purchased it in the end. Of all the castles restored between 1945 and 2010, thirty-four were later sold (see appendix 5 for a list). So, these castles all entered the high-end housing market. Some were sold for tragic

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<sup>461</sup> David Ross and Alan MacDermid ‘Fight to be king of the castles’ **The Herald (Glasgow)** April 9, 2008

<sup>462</sup> Nicholas Browne **Castles and Crocodiles**, 7

<sup>463</sup> <http://popdirt.com/michael-jackson-eyes-69-million-castle/5463/> accessed November 2010



reasons, such as Fordell, sold by Sam Fairbairn after the death of her husband. A few were restored with the intention of selling on, although mainly the motivations seemed not to be to make money quickly, but rather to make a fine job of restoring a building in need of care. In this category would fall Kit Martin and Nicholas Groves-Raines, both architect 'serial restorers' who bought properties, restored them and sold on to fund the next restoration, although the latter lived in them for some years first. A few were sold because the owner could not afford the upkeep, such as Fawside. Dean and Miers claimed that the sellers made a profit when they sold on:

Often these restorations began as labours-of-love rather than commercial investments but the sheer romance of living in a Scottish tower house has ensured that most of the pioneers have seen a healthy increase in the value of their tower houses and enabled them to more than cover their costs when they have sold.<sup>464</sup>

However, David Walker claimed that "Experience has shown time after time that the cost of restoring a roofless or badly decayed tower house is likely to be far in excess of the market value of the end result."<sup>465</sup> Who is correct? Walker is almost certainly correct if one looks at the costs compared to the re-sale value at the time of the restoration, but with property prices having risen almost inexorably in the postwar years, it is usually only a matter of a few years before the market value exceeds the investment, particularly if the rebuilding has involved cost-saving DIY. Both Abbot's Tower and Ballencrieff were bought as dilapidated ruins with small amounts of land from farmers in 1989. The purchase prices are not known, but are likely to have been four-figure or low five-figure sums, if the price of similar properties at that time is taken into account. In 2004 the restored Abbot's Tower was for sale at offers over £425,000<sup>466</sup>, and in 2006 Ballencrieff (a much bigger property with slightly more land, in a prime rural location near to Edinburgh city) sold for £1,200,000<sup>467</sup>. Both restorations were DIY projects, with the owners and their families carrying out much of the work themselves, so that costs would be relatively low. In addition, Ballencrieff received some financial support from Historic Scotland.

The physical difficulties inherent in castle living may even add to their charm when selling, according to an estate agent. "'Castle buyers," explains Macnab, "are eccentrics. They're looking at buildings that make very few concessions to modern living. Your basic castle is a tower. The next stage up is an L-shape, and finally a Z-shape. You're looking at places designed around a great hall, with spiral staircases that run clockwise so that a right-handed swordsman could still fight. Today, people want a large family kitchen. They want bathrooms. I sold one castle where the facilities were so primitive that every bedroom needed a potty, which, when they were full, were put in wardrobes to keep the moths away!" He went on to make another interesting point about what buyers do **not** want: "I would produce four pages of history, only to discover that buyers

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<sup>464</sup> Marcus Dean and Mary Miers **Scotland's Endangered Houses** (1990) SAVE Britain's Heritage, London, 8

<sup>465</sup> Walker in Clow, 29

<sup>466</sup> Dorothy Walker 'Ancient and Modern North of the Border' **The Independent** September 8, 2004

<sup>467</sup> <http://www.zoopla.co.uk/home-values/east-lothian/> accessed September 2009

wanted the basic spec – the dimensions, number of bedrooms, acreage and plumbing details. The Russians, the Americans, the Brits: they're looking for a prestige home, not a museum.”<sup>468</sup> These, presumably, are the buyers who want a castle that is ready to live in, rather than a ruin.

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### THE FAILED PROJECTS

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Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? *Luke 14:27-29*

Despite the eventual profits which were made by some restorers who sold on, thirteen projects have been identified which did not make it to completion. The planned restorations which stalled, for whatever reason, throw into relief the particular difficulties inherent in castle rebuilding. All of these were planned as restorations by owners who were, presumably, filled with optimism and had a vision (or fantasy) of rescuing a ruinous building and bringing it back to a habitable state, just like the one hundred successful projects – except that the restoration never happened, or at least not until another would-be restoring owner came along and bought the ruin. Many restorers admit that they were unduly optimistic about the costs of restoring and that eventual costs were a severe strain on their budgets, for example Matthew Parris:

Perhaps it is lucky that neither the scale nor the expense of what we still had to do had properly dawned on us – let alone the time it would take to do it. Otherwise we might have despaired.....All I can say, though, is that in the face of the major restoration of an historic building, no high-earning job is high-earning enough.<sup>469</sup>

Some, like Duntarvie, were begun but not completed; others, such as Dunskey, Baltersan and Lordsclairnie, never made it off the ground. Others were begun by one would-be restoring owner and abandoned, then taken over by a second owner. Rowallan and Tioram were still, in 2011, the subjects of long running disputes between their would-be restoring owners and Historic Scotland. In addition, the restoration of Inchdrewer Castle was started (but not completed) by ‘old’ owner Robin Ian Evelyn Milne Stuart le Prince de la Lanne-Mirrlees in 1971 and was subsequently placed on the ‘Buildings at Risk’ inventory for Scotland, with this entry in 2008:

**Reason for Risk/Development History:**

1971: The castle is restored, though the interior is left uncompleted and the project is abandoned.  
 December 1992: Exterior inspection reveals the castle to remain in good condition.  
 23 December 1996: Press reports note that the owner plans to restore the castle.  
 January 2000: Local planners report that considerable interest has been shown in the property.  
 January 2004: Local planners report that the owner has refused an offer of purchase.  
 February 2008: External inspection finds the Castle, although restored in 1971, showing signs of a lack of maintenance; all glazing is broken and the property is unsecured.<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> Helen Brown ‘Wanted: Laird to take on the ultimate doer-upper’ March 5 2008 **The Independent**

<sup>469</sup> Parris **A Castle in Spain**, 164

<sup>470</sup> <http://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/> accessed October 2010



FIGURE 48 INCHDREWER CASTLE INTERIOR 2007<sup>471</sup>

The interior seems to be in a horrible state in this photograph of 2007, with evidence of breeze blocks and cement, but since Robin Mirrlees has refused to sell the castle it is unlikely to be restored during his lifetime.

Aiket	Owner sold on before starting
Balgonie	Owner started, then sold on
Baltersan	Twice – first owner sold straight away; James Brown did DIY clearing first and spent 16 years trying to raise funds before putting the castle on the market
Barholm	Owner did DIY clearing; forced to sell because of a divorce
Duntarvie	Owner scaffolded then became ‘fed up’ with HS
Fawside	Almost finished, then repossessed by the bank, which finished off the work
Hatton	Owner became bankrupt after almost finishing restoration
Law	Owner started then became bankrupt
Lordscairnie	American dotcom millionaire became ‘fed up’ with processes
Niddrie	Owner bankrupt after partially completing restoration
Ravenstone	Owner started botched job then sold
Stoneypath	Owners never got started; sold because could not afford to restore
Torwood	Owner died after forty years of hopeless DIY bungling

**Table 18 Castles bought for restoration but sold before completion**

<sup>471</sup> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/62445171@N00/1435077235/in/photostream/>

The case studies of failed projects which follow illustrate the difficulties, the reasons for them and the outcomes. As can be seen from Table x, the majority of reasons for giving up on a proposed restoration are financial. The would-be restoring owner of Lordscairnie, Robert Bourne, however, claimed that distance was the problem:

In 1996, the American dotcom millionaire spotted Lordscairnie, a listed fortified medieval tower, and booked a flight to Scotland. He can still remember the "whoop" of joy he gave when he first saw the castle, near Moonzie, in Fife, which was abandoned in 1644. "I visited in the depths of winter. I drove up and the ground was lightly dusted with snow and frost. I just loved it. You don't get anything like it in America." Full of entrepreneurial spirit, Bourne, 37, founder of the financial software company Pegasus, snapped up the castle, set in 30 acres of grassland, for £80,000, to turn it into a home. "You can't buy a closet for that in New York," he says. But, after seven years, without a builder in sight, and more than £30,000 of research and surveys, the uninhabitable castle is back on the market.<sup>472</sup>

Bourne intended to use Lordscairnie not only as a family home, but also as a centre of excellence for Internet software development and a retreat for software developers. His wife, violinist Maria Bachmann, planned to use the castle's Great Hall as a venue for concerts and recordings. These were ambitious plans, perhaps better called fantasies, which came to nothing. They expected to take possession of the castle in late 2001, but instead he sold it in 2003, without any work having been done, after he sold his company and moved to the west coast of America, claiming that Fife was 'too far for a weekend bolthole'.

The stalling of the restoration of Duntarvie Castle in West Lothian was apparently due to disenchantment with Historic Scotland. Duntarvie is a large late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century house which is a roofless ruin. In 1993 Mr Nicholsby, an Edinburgh businessman, bought Duntarvie from the Hopetoun Estate, hoping to restore it as a business headquarters. In 2004 he was given planning permission by West Lothian Council to restore the castle for use as an extension of his business, for corporate headquarters and a kilt-fitting centre. However, Historic Scotland opposed the plans, to the owner's frustration: "Mr Nicholsby, who owns Geoffrey (Tailor) Kiltmakers on the Royal Mile, today said "ridiculous" complaints had cost him time and money and that the proposed inquiry was a waste of public cash."<sup>473</sup> In 2008 The Sunday Times reported the proposed sale of the building, still scaffolded but unrestored:

As the kilt-maker clashed heads with the bureaucrats, however, years passed. He no longer has the need - or presumably the will - to see his scheme completed. He says: "It cost a lot of money and grief to get to this stage. Buying Duntarvie alone took five years of negotiations. All the hard work has been done in terms of bureaucracy. In relative terms, the building work could be pretty straightforward. But I am 61 now, and time moves on."<sup>474</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Helen Davies 'Small castle, big hassle' **The Sunday Times** January 19 2003

<sup>473</sup> Chris Mooney 'The incredible moving castle' **Evening News (Edinburgh)** April 3 2004

<sup>474</sup> Greg Gordon 'Geoffrey Nicholsby, kilt-maker to stars, sells up' **The Sunday Times**, April 27 2008



FIGURE 49 DUNTARVIE CASTLE WEST LOTHIAN MAY 2008<sup>475</sup>



FIGURE 50 ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF DUNTARVIE CASTLE RESTORED<sup>476</sup>

In 2011 it was still for sale after three years on the market, for £500,000, with full planning consent for restoration into a modern office headquarters/conference facility. It seems unlikely, in uncertain economic times, that there will be any buyers.

Peter Miller's ten years of ownership of Stonypath (aka Stonypath) Tower came to nothing, due to lack of finance, and he sold it 2001 to Stephen Cole, who restored it between 2001 and 2006.

Peter Miller bought Stonypath Tower in East Lothian in the mid-1980s with the firm intention of restoring the crumbling structure and taking up residence. .... Parts of rooms, staircases and towers remained, hinting tantalisingly at what had been and might become. The investment required was enormous, however. Optimistic guesses suggested that £250,000 might create a habitable home, if it were allied with the huge commitment of time and energy on the part of the Millers. Spending double and treble that would have been easy. During his decade as Stonypath's custodian, Mr Miller was blessed with neither the time nor the money to undertake the work - although he did turn the adjacent cottages into a useful place to live while the work was underway.

<sup>475</sup> Author

<sup>476</sup> <http://www.rightmove.co.uk/property-for-sale/property-10357587.html> Strutt and Parker's sales particulars (offers over £500,000), accessed March 2011

Eventually, after much heart searching, he sold his pile of rubble little changed from the day it became his.<sup>477</sup>

James Brown, owner of Baltersan, tried to raise the finance to restore it for sixteen years, but finally put the castle on the market in 2008. Its large size – and consequent high rebuilding costs – coupled with its unfortunate situation, beside a busy road and near an unattractive village, with a tiny amount of ground and no access road, mean that, like Duntarvie, it is unlikely that it will sell and be restored.

"I'm just an ordinary man from a working-class background," he sighs, "but I've been gazing balefully at castles since I was five years old. After discovering McGibbon & Ross's classic, five-volume work on Scottish castles, I began scouring Scotland for somewhere I might buy. ....[T]hen, in the late 1980s, I found Baltersan. After a year of negotiating with the owner, the Marchioness of Ailsa, my offer of £5,000 was gazumped by a lady who offered £36,500. She could have got it for £5,500 if she'd known! In the early 1990s, this lady went bust and I bought it from the liquidators for £26,000. And it was then that I began to learn that a dream can become a heavy burden." Brown spent the next 10 years fighting for planning permission and negotiating with the landowners for more than the "postage stamp" three-quarters of an acre that came with the ruin. "I'd finally agreed the grant from Historic Scotland, and agreed terms with the landowners. But I needed the private investment to create a private residence club. And it was at that last hurdle that I fell. I've spent £150,000 keeping architects and lawyers in gin and tonics. I even went on *Dragons' Den* to ask for the money, and was eaten alive."<sup>478</sup>

James Brown is being disingenuous here; he was not 'eaten alive' but, in fact, offered a substantial sum towards the restoration of Baltersan on the television programme (BBC2 *Dragons Den* 21 December 2005) by the investor Duncan Bannatyne, but refused to accept his equity terms. In another interview quote Brown claimed "I was treated very well and indeed came close to winning cash."<sup>479</sup> The Building Repair grant Offer from HS was subject to James Brown securing two million pounds of investment cash, which is an enormous, almost certainly unrealistic amount of money to raise from scratch. He gave up. "I have reached my limit. I'm 61 years old now, I've cleared 1,000 tonnes of soil and rubble, catalogued artefacts, and sorted and stored the reusable masonry. I've taken the project as far as I can, and now it's time for me to have a life before death." Before deciding to sell, Brown had made detailed plans for the restoration, including a reconstructive drawing, below, and idealized imagery of the completed project:

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<sup>477</sup> Tim Dawson 'Yours for keeps - a proper castle? Get real' July 21 2001 **The Daily Telegraph**

<sup>478</sup> Helen Brown 'Wanted: Laird to take on the ultimate doer-upper' **The Independent** 5 March 2008

<sup>479</sup> <http://visitscotland.briefyourmarket.com/Archived/Ayrshire-Arran/2008/01/Historic-Scotland-ready-to-support-castle-restoration.aspx> accessed March 2011



FIGURE 51 PLAN OF BALTERSAN RESTORED<sup>480</sup>

The whole property will be decorated, furnished and fitted to very high standards, including original works of art and antiques, respecting the historic fabric and acknowledging the hierarchy of the building. The entrancing visual delights of Renaissance architecture; the smell of leather-bound books, wood fires and beeswax candles; the gentle touch of smooth, limewashed plaster and heavy, damask drapes; the secure sound of strong, iron keys turning in sturdy locks and thick, oak doors firmly closing; the taste of fresh, organic food and that sixth sense - that can only be felt by the individual.<sup>481</sup>

Torwood Castle, near Falkirk, was bought in 1957 by Gordon Millar, a former WW2 pilot and chartered accountant, from the Carron Company. He is reported to have lived in the building from 1961 until his death in 1998, having built a concrete dome for shelter within the roofless tower. He lived without running water or any of the comforts of modern life, gaining a local reputation as a crazy old man with aggressive traits. He was a DIY 'restorer' who worked on the rebuilding alone with no expert help or advice and with no regard to historical authenticity. A local amateur historian, Nigel Turnbull, wrote an admiring account of Gordon's life:

Gordon did an incredible amount of work on Torwood Castle.....He rebuilt a large section of stonework on the north wall of the Grand Hall. He built new sections of spiral staircase (using concrete). ..... Somewhere along the line, he learned the art of arch building and arches started appearing in Torwood Castle where arches had never been before. A room appeared that had never been there before. This was not a renovation by the standard definition of the word - more like Gordon's creative juices flowing.<sup>482</sup>

<sup>480</sup> <http://www.baltersan.com/>

<sup>481</sup> [www.baltersan.com](http://www.baltersan.com/) accessed July 2007; no longer available online

<sup>482</sup> Nigel J.C. Turnbull **Gordon Millar of Torwood Castle** unpublished essay, 2010





FIGURE 52 TORWOOD CASTLE 2007<sup>483</sup>

All of these failed projects had taken years of their would-be restoring owners' lives – between seven for the owner of Lordscairnie and sixteen for James Brown. As he said, 'A dream can become a heavy burden.'<sup>484</sup> The fantasy of finishing is what kept the owners going, but James Brown never realized his dreams, so eloquently expressed on his website. Yet one hundred other owner restorers *did* acquire the 'wood fires, sturdy locks and thick, oak doors'. What are the determining factors that differentiate between successful and unsuccessful projects? One could claim a number of interrelated factors, to do with personality (determination, optimism, stoicism, tenacity) and practicalities (availability of materials, an experienced workforce, sympathetic planning officials) but it is clear that there are only two assets which are absolutely essential: consent from Historic Scotland (or local planners if the building is not listed) and enough funds to finance the building work. Without *both* of these, projects are doomed. James Brown had the former, even including the provisional offer of some financial support from them, but he was unable to find the latter. Rowallan, Duntarvie and Tioram had the latter, but not the former. Peter Gillies managed the restoration of Ballencrieff as a DIY project in the 1990s, but warned future restorers: 'Castle restoration is too expensive for ordinary people these days,' says Peter. 'Unless you've got money in place, you can't do it. Thirty years ago [this was written in 2005] it was possible for those of modest income.'<sup>485</sup> Grants from Historic Scotland were given to at least twenty-four of the individual restoring owners and the money was doubtless more than useful – but never sufficient, without a considerable contribution to the bulk of the costs on the part of the owner.

Some owners appeared to have *both* the funds and the backing of HS, but still did not proceed; they just ran out of steam, especially those living overseas. Lordscairnie, Newark and Dunskey are three castles which were bought for restoration but which were not completed. None of these three would-be restorers lived in Scotland, or the UK, and none is British; probably a combination of distance, plus a lack of knowledge and experience of the local culture, simply overwhelmed and defeated them, although Newark and Dunskey are still owned by their would-be restorers. As I know from personal experience with Barholm, the difficulties of running a large building project

<sup>483</sup> <http://www.geograph.org.uk/reuse.php?id=435251> accessed October 2010

<sup>484</sup> Helen Brown 'Wanted: Laird to take on the ultimate doer-upper' **The Independent** 5 March 2008

<sup>485</sup> Ben Flanagan 'Where you can live in the past' **The Observer** 20 November 2005



are amplified if one is not even available in the country to visit the site and talk face to face with the design and construction team. Narratives of British restorers who have taken on castles overseas are full of anguish at the difficulties of dealing with ‘foreign’ builders, officials and regulations. James Charles Roy’s account of managing the restoration of Moyode, as an American who visited Ireland irregularly, showed candid exasperation:

In Ireland, if you don’t watch it, you can be skinned alive. One of my biyearly trials was to have people come over to Moyode to discuss the job. The hurricanes of talk I endured! The mountains of pledges, promissory notes, drawings, and quotations that never materialized! The baits and traps strewn in conversation! In over twenty years, I never met a builder I thought I could trust.<sup>486</sup>

Roy sold Moyode before the restoration was fully finished in 2008.

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## NEW CASTLES

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Once, of course, all castles were new. The heyday of castle building in Scotland was 1500 - 1680, when it is estimated that more than 1,000 castles, or chateaux, were built.<sup>487</sup> A second flush occurred in early Victorian times, when nouveaux riches industrialists rushed to build in the Balmoral style popularized by Queen Victoria, aided by architects such as William Burn and David Bryce. Still-wealthy aristocrats disguised their outmoded but genuine late mediaeval castles by re-fashioning them baronially as pseudo mediaeval castles, for example, Kinnaird. The ultimate means of acquiring a ‘new’ castle is to build one from scratch, and that is what a small but increasing number of owners and architects have done since 1945. Is this new building activity a subset of the phenomenon of rebuilding that is being investigated in this research? Are they the same thing, essentially, with the same kinds of owner? Chapter two touched upon this practice in Europe and beyond. Fifteen new, twentieth century Scottish castles have been identified, a tiny number compared to the quantity of restorations and major repair projects. The list (see appendix 7) may not be exhaustive, however, as these buildings have often been designed for very wealthy clients in secluded places and are generally not included in the literature on castles or significant buildings. Many of the ‘laird’s houses’ mimic sixteenth century tower houses and newspaper articles emphasize the authentic ‘oldness’ of the buildings; their representations of the appropriate features, such as significant height, turrets and spiral staircases, and even coldness, conform to a shared understanding of what a Scottish castle *should* be like. There are two general types of owner: the DIY builders, often on a limited budget, who want to have fun building themselves a castle in much the same way as many of the castle restorers, and the wealthy or super-rich who can afford to commission a very special house and indulge their fantasies. The second type of owner may be divided into two further kinds – what might unkindly be called ‘pastiche’ commissioners, who want their new castle to look like an old one, and those who use

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<sup>486</sup> James Charles Roy *The Fields of Athenry*, 125

<sup>487</sup> Charles McKean, *The Scottish Chateau*, 16

the idea of a tower or castle as a springboard for a more creative approach and build a 'modern castle'. Lachlan Stewart, the architect who bought and restored Ballone Castle, also designs and builds new castles:

The popularity of Scottish castles has caused their prices to rise considerably and there is now a growing belief that there still may not be enough castles to go round. Consequently a new market has arisen for brand new castles, based on traditional designs. Stewart, a leading architect in this area, has already built two new castles from scratch, has another new one under construction in Speyside and a fourth, much bigger building at the design stage.<sup>488</sup>

The 'new market' is for wealthy clients who want an off-the-peg comfortable house in the twenty-first century that mimics one built in the sixteenth century. But the first mock castle built in the post War period was a DIY project - Easterheughs in Fife:

It has everything you would expect of a Scottish towerhouse. From a commanding outcrop of rock it overlooks the Forth and Edinburgh. Steep pantiled roofs top its tall, narrow walls. And, inside, a turnpike stair links its first-floor hall with three other floors whose details affect an effortless deception. But it is not what it seems. Standing on the road between Aberdour and Burntisland, Easterheughs is the fantasy-made-real of two men, trained in neither architecture nor construction, who wanted to build themselves a castle. Between 1946 and 1950 William Thomas and his friend Rhodes constructed the building almost unaided. Its enduring capacity to deceive is testimony to their skill.<sup>489</sup>

The story of the building of Easterheughs, the earliest of the newbuilds described here, is reminiscent of the restoration narratives in its epic scale, with heroic feats of endurance on the part of the two naïve building partners:

Knowing nothing about building, Thomas and Rhodes buried themselves in books before making a table-top model of the planned construction - which they based loosely on Rossend. Their activity was frenetic. Each weekend, Rhodes would travel up from London on the sleeper for a couple of days' hard labour. Thomas, meanwhile, would scour Fife in a lorry in search of building materials. Stones came from High Binns, a deserted village nearby, the pantiles from the distillery at Auchtertool. They rescued crow-steps from another village, The Common, and liberated carved stonework from Otterstone House. Their working methods were just as eccentric. Rather than standing on a temporary platform and building from the outside, Rhodes and Thomas built from the inside. Even the roof was constructed inside out without using any scaffolding. They lifted every stone individually in a wheelbarrow and employed pit props to support the floors under construction.<sup>490</sup>

By contrast, the majority of newbuild castles were architect designed, many for wealthy clients. Some wanted 'authenticity', i.e. a fake castle that would fool the eye, like Easterheughs. The architects firm Michael Rasmussen built two such 'castles'. One was Balmuir House in Aberdeenshire:

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<sup>488</sup> Sonia Purnell 'Escape to the North' **The Independent** 21 April 2004

<sup>489</sup> Tim Dawson 'Monumental Triumph' October 13 1996 **The Sunday Times**

<sup>490</sup> *ibid*

Having already designed and extended the client's previous house in Aboyne we received a telephone call one day from Canada, where the clients had been posted, asking us to "build me a castle". After extensive thought and research this former Estate Office building came up for sale which had been a former Manse and by a "clever sleight of hand" we made the Manse look like an Edwardian extension to a 16th century Tower House.<sup>491</sup>



FIGURE 53 BALMUIR HOUSE

The command 'build me a castle!' was responded to by Michael Rasmussen with a cunning plan to fabricate a sixteenth century tower house by disguising and adding to an existing building. Other wealthy clients were even more creative in their approach – or allowed their architects to be so. Corrour Lodge, for example, is not instantly recognizable as a Scottish castle but is described as such in its advertising copy<sup>492</sup> and in newspaper articles. Its Modernist towers, which are what give it the 'castle' justification, stand out against the skyline; it even has a Great Hall. Built by one of Britain's richest women, Lisbet Koerner, The Royal Fine Arts Commission of Scotland noted at the time of review that the Corrour Lodge is 'destined to become one of the few examples of world-class 20th-century architecture in Scotland.'<sup>493</sup>



FIGURE 54 CORROUR LODGE<sup>494</sup>

<sup>491</sup> Michael Rasmussen Associates website: <http://www.rasarc.com/Balmuir32.htm> accessed September 2010. Photograph and text

<sup>492</sup> <http://www.ltr.co.uk/properties/scotland/corrour> accessed March 2010

<sup>493</sup> [http://www.glasgowarchitecture.co.uk/moshe\\_safdie\\_corrour.htm](http://www.glasgowarchitecture.co.uk/moshe_safdie_corrour.htm) accessed June 2011

<sup>494</sup> <http://www.luxist.com/photos/dream-escapes-scotland/2255365/>

Another contemporary tower house, Castle Dhu, is described by John Dunbar in the Buildings of Scotland series:

An eye catching tower house by Crichton Wood, 1998-2000. Strictly contemporary design, relying for its effect upon form and massing rather than replication of medieval detail. Three main storeys and a stepped L-plan, each element slightly dynamic. .... Rendered breeze block and brick, with gabled slate covered roofs. The stair-turret rises to a glazed caphouse, and two of the salient angles of the main tower sprout metal-framed glass turrets to capture the magnificent views to S and E.<sup>495</sup>

The new towers and castles described here are mostly far removed in concept from the new North American castles described in chapter two, in their quest for authenticity and/or good design -although not all achieve either. The owners and architects of these new buildings – both Scottish and American – have indulged themselves in a degree of fantasy; however, in most of the Scottish cases, particularly in building the sixteenth century fakes, there has been account taken of the local context and an attempt to blend in with the landscape, along with a quest for internal fittings which look ‘authentic’, as in Strathieburn Castle, built by an architect as a DIY project in 1985:

They simply can't believe it when they hear the truth," says Guthrie, an oil executive from Aberdeen. He bought the house four years ago from an architect who had built it as his dream home before retiring abroad. "He spent years hunting down reclaimed materials: carved stone corbels from demolished towers; flagstones from a church; a 16th-century fireplace; oak beams and panelling. The house may be modern, but much of the fabric is genuinely old." It was also, when he bought it, lacking many modern comforts. "A real castle is supposed to be cold and austere, and that's exactly how it was when we arrived," says Guthrie. "A major renovation was required to install central heating, double-glazing and improved facilities, along with a revamp of the decor." Strathieburn is fun. However well it may deceive, it is not a precious relic that imposes rules and standards on anybody who dares to live there.<sup>496</sup>

The last sentence takes an oblique thrust at the regulations imposed on historic buildings and provides a *raison d'être* or justification for a new building. It is akin to having one's cake and eating it. The retired architect Ian Begg, who had been involved in more than a dozen castle restorations, including the rescue of Rossend Castle (see chapter five for the narrative) was asked whether he would want to restore a castle for himself, but he preferred to build a new castle from scratch. He began in the early 1990s to build himself a new tower in Plockton:

Ravenscraig is the fullest possible expression of Begg's architectural vision, his politics, his family, his own story....."It's not a copy of an old building, but it does try to get the feel of one, because I'm very, very passionately interested in the tradition. The idea was to see if I could build something modern, meeting all building regulations, using modern materials, and yet get a feeling inside that

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<sup>495</sup> Kitty Craft, John Dunbar and Richard Fawcett **Borders** (The Buildings of Scotland series) 2006 Yale University Press, London, 511

<sup>496</sup> Robertson, Alastair 'Don't mock the Tudor' September 25, 2005 **Sunday Times**

this was a protecting structure, achieve that very strong sense of enclosure. I wanted it to look, or rather feel old inside.<sup>497</sup>

The 'oldness' which both Ian Begg and the architect of Strathieburn were striving for is reminiscent of the anti-modernist preoccupations which Ziolkowski described in his extended essay on tower living in the early twentieth century, which he described as a response to and a bulwark against urban modernism and cultural despair.<sup>498</sup> Other castle builders had a commercial reason for their projects, such as Glenskirlie Castle in Aberdeenshire:

When the Macaloney family went looking for a castle to turn into a hotel they couldn't find one that quite fitted the bill. But instead of giving up, they went one better - they built their own. Most Scottish castles boast rough stonework, banqueting halls and fireplaces you could fit an elephant into - but not many have spa baths, wifi connections and bedrooms called Sexy Remy. Glenskirlie Castle, near Kilsyth, has turrets, a spiral staircase, thick solid oak doors and beautiful gardens. But it also has all mod cons and its own restaurant.<sup>499</sup>

The first sentence of this newspaper report may not be correct, but the salient features, 'turrets, a spiral staircase, thick solid oak doors' demonstrate an understanding of what a 'real' castle *should* be like. The height, harling and round turret-topped tower make it instantly recognisable as a Scottish castle, even if it does not conform to the proportions and design of any existing building.



FIGURE 55 GLENSKIRLIE CASTLE<sup>500</sup>

In 2001 Cameron Mackintosh, theatre impresario, commissioned the building of a large house with castle-like features on the shores of Loch Nevis, in a mishmash of architectural styles - a pseudo-mediaeval round tower in the centre, surrounded by add-ons that could be crudely imitating anything from the seventeenth to early twentieth century. Again, the media response was positive. The architectural journalist, Hugh Pearman, writing in *The Sunday Times*, was full of

<sup>497</sup> Tom Morton 'In The Court Of The Concrete King' **The Scotsman** April 11 1994

<sup>498</sup> Ziolkowski *passim*

<sup>499</sup> King of New Scots Castle (no byline) **Evening Times (Glasgow)** August 11, 2007

<sup>500</sup> <http://www.iananthony.com/biographypage.htm>

admiration for the eclectic style of the house: “Amazingly, he has pulled it off. He has built a real Arts and Crafts house at the start of the 21st century. At no point does it feel forced or - for all its owner's occupation - over-theatrical. It just feels comfortable, natural, something that has arrived in the landscape by some organic process.”<sup>501</sup> Some might call it a rich man's fantasy indulgence rather than a positive addition to Scotland's architecture in the twenty-first century, however.



FIGURE 56 CAMERON MACKINTOSH'S HOUSE

The variety of building styles, owner types and reasons for building described here is such that they cannot be said to represent any kind of ‘movement’ or phenomenon in the world of Scottish castles; the owners consist of the same types identified in chapter three but the proportions are different, with wealthy owners and architects in the majority. Numbers remain too small, however, for generalizations to hold water. At present, it is surmised that the building of new castles and towers is an expression of people's desire for the security of a refuge from the modern world and/or a status symbol; for a few architects there may also be a genuinely exciting exploration of the fusion of traditional and new design and materials. Whatever style is built in, however, they can be assured that the media will treat the results kindly and report admiringly. A castle is always good copy.

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## CONCLUSIONS

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This chapter has demonstrated the dynamic nature of the history of Scottish castles in the post WW2 period. Castles have not simply stood as ‘silent sentinels’ of Scotland's history; they have become commodities to be traded on the open property market to an extent that never existed previously, and their buyers are people from a broader section of society. The buyers who embarked upon ambitious restoration projects often had to suffer extreme difficulties and hardships, but nonetheless were not deterred and, indeed, seemed to thrive despite or perhaps because of them. Battles with the authorities and with neighbours, rather than privation or potential poverty, were a major source of frustration and distress for restorers.

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<sup>501</sup> Hugh Pearman ‘The castle Sir Cameron built’ February 15, 2004 **The Sunday Times**

For those who were eventually forced to stop by circumstances, it must have been a bitter blow after years of commitment. "I've taken the project as far as I can, and now it's time for me to have a life before death,"<sup>502</sup> said James Brown when he put Baltersan up for sale. Changes in the landscape, along with changes in commercial use and in access for 'ordinary' people have accompanied the increasing commodification of castles. Another aspect of this is seen in the contemporary castles which have been built, imposing a small (but growing?) new generation of 'old' towers on the landscape of rural Scotland.

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<sup>502</sup> Brown, Helen 'Wanted: Laird to take on the ultimate doer-upper' March 5 2008 **The Independent**

## CHAPTER FIVE: MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS & RESTORATION NARRATIVES

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To work the alchemy, journalists reshape real life, cutting away details, simplifying events, 'improving' ordinary speech, sometimes inventing quotes, to create a narrative which will work.<sup>503</sup>

This chapter takes the picture that has been sketched so far and firstly delineates the themes that have emerged from the statistics and the accounts of the problems and processes. These are fleshed out with extracts from journalists' interviews with a number of owner restorers to further illustrate the themes and also the representations of castle restoration perpetrated in the print media, some of which have been quoted from already in chapter four. Secondly, fifteen first person narratives of those who restored a castle, from a wide range of different experiences, are presented as individual case studies. Their stories represent the voices of experience, voices with tones and timbres at times both remarkably similar and highly idiosyncratic, but with a clear set of themes which underpinned most of the projects. Chapter five, then, addresses the question of 'why' on both an individual and societal level.

Changes in society and in attitudes to heritage, combined with political and legislative changes, have already been shown to have an enormous impact on the safeguarding and rescue of buildings at risk throughout the 1970s and 80s. The other influential force - the 'Fourth Estate' - was the media, which through its representations of castles, ruins and restoration projects created a discourse which shaped the way in which they were perceived. In the second half of the twentieth century, the role and power of the media in the structure and organisation of society increased enormously, as new technology and the internet revolution took hold. The newspaper press, which is where the majority of quotes in this section and in chapter four have come from, is one means by which ideas and representations are circulated, although its influence is waning in the twenty-first century, as circulations fall away in the face of competing digital media. The question of whether the media shapes or reflects 'reality' is a difficult one, but in the context of Scottish castles, Andrew Marr's acute observation that journalists '*reshape* real life' rings true. The media developed an increasing interest in castle restorations in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, although, like the restorations themselves, this phenomenon has not been identified in the scholarly literature. What is broadcast and presented in newspapers and glossy magazines informs the way in which popular culture understands the processes and outcomes in a kind of two-dimensional form, often characterized by stereotypes. At least twenty restoring owners of Scottish castles gave interviews to newspapers and magazines and these narratives not only entertain the reading public, but reinforce the stereotypes. They also encouraged others in the idea that restoring a castle is an attainable goal for 'ordinary people'.

Sometimes it is the owners themselves who present carefully shaped imagery through the media. The advertising copy and photographs on the Aikwood Castle website, opened for holiday

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<sup>503</sup> Andrew Marr **My Trade. A Short History of British Journalism** (2004) Macmillan, London, 56



accommodation and functions from April 2011, call up images of history, royal connections, country sports, intimacy, peace and luxurious living:



FIGURE 57 AIKWOOD TOWER ADVERTISEMENT<sup>504</sup>

*Understated Luxury in the Scottish Borders*: Located 40 miles south of Edinburgh in the heart of the Ettrick Forest - the ancient hunting ground of Scottish royalty up to the days of Mary Queen of Scots - the stunning local landscape around Aikwood Tower offers some of the finest shooting and fishing in Scotland, among many other leisure activities. While perfect for pleasure, Aikwood Tower's up-to-date facilities and function spaces make it ideal for corporate guests as well as social gatherings, such as small intimate weddings and other special celebrations. Whether you are looking for peace, calm and to be left alone to enjoy your stay on a self-catered basis or wish to be spoilt with fine food and drink, the discreet, efficient and friendly staff of Aikwood Tower will help meet your every need.<sup>505</sup>

Those who have been through the process of rebuilding and reoccupying a ruinous castle possess the only authentic voice of experience and it is through their first person narratives that we can gain some insight into what it meant to them at the time and why they embarked upon – and continued along – a difficult and costly path. These narratives address in greater depth the second of the research questions: who were the restorers? The fifteen autobiographical accounts which are presented as case studies at the end of this chapter demonstrate a slew of motives and motifs that characterize the ‘typical’ castle restoration project, with individual differences highlighting various aspects of the problems and pleasures of the process. There are relatively few contradictions between the accounts, apart from the occasional dissenting voice: Gerald Laing wanted to use new wood for his beams, whereas most restorers tried to source reclaimed timber; Helen Bailey did not want to apply for a grant, unlike the majority, who were grateful to receive any money offered to them; Graham Carson was happy with the supportive attitude of the Historic Buildings Council, but most owners viewed the authorities as obstructive rather than helpful. Overall, however, the first person narratives present a rather coherent account of what

<sup>504</sup> <http://www.aikwoodtower.com/> accessed March 2011

<sup>505</sup> <http://www.aikwoodtower.com/> accessed March 2011

the rebuilding process meant to the new owners and the experiences that they found most salient, such as battles with the authorities and physical hardship.

The accounts that are reported by the media also have a coherence, but the subtleties of individual storylines are replaced by a heightened sense of theatricality and the perpetuation of stereotypes. Castles are cold and damp, huge grim fortalices, perched majestically on crags, or piles of old rubble, turned into idyllic family homes. They are inhabited by ghosts. Owners are 'kings of the castle', with 'nerves of steel', defying advice and breaking rules and having 'A Dream Come True'. The last phrase was the title of an article about Kinkell's restoration in a glossy magazine, which started, "Kinkell Castle sits on the brae overlooking the Conon Valley, nestled among emerald trees like a glistening white pearl. It's hard to believe that thirty years ago the building was drab and derelict, home only to generations of jackdaws."<sup>506</sup> Gerald Laing used much more restrained language in his personal narrative about Kinkell.

The journalists' articles are not only less subtle, they are qualitatively different, in that they are often third person co-constructions, where the restorer has been interviewed by a journalist, and the accounts written in articles published in the printed media or on the Internet. In most cases the journalist approached the owners for an interview, rather the other way round, so the motivation for the narrative is external and the themes explored are under the control of the journalist and/or publisher. The words in quotation marks are probably verbatim (but personal experience indicates that this may not always be the case - some journalists simply make up their quotes) or at least represent the respondent's views; however, in a recorded media interview the reader generally does not know what questions have been asked and what preconceptions and biases the journalist has brought to the interview, what judgements were being passed and in which direction s/he may have sought to take the owners through questioning. To use the media jargon, the journalist 'sets the agenda'<sup>507</sup>. The broad church of the newspaper and TV media of the late twentieth century made restoration seem both attractive and accessible.

## THEMES, MOTIVATIONS & MEDIA

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Castle people are die-hard, dedicated enthusiasts, with a touch of insanity - you have to be a bit mad to live in a castle.<sup>508</sup>

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<sup>506</sup> No byline 'A Dream Come True' **Homes and Interiors Scotland** Issue 9 2001

<sup>507</sup> A seminal article on the media's ability to influence what people think about is Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw 'The Agenda-setting Function of Mass Media' in **Public Opinion Quarterly** (1972) 36 (2) 176 - 187

<sup>508</sup> No byline 'A Scotsman's castle is his home' *The Birmingham Magazine* (Birmingham University), 1997

FIGURE 58 STUART MORRIS OF BALGONIE CASTLE<sup>509</sup>

It is clear from the stories of hardships and battles in chapter four that castle restoration is a difficult and risky business, particularly for the less well-off. Why, then, do people do it? Are they 'a bit mad' as Stuart Morris of Balgonie claimed? This is the view of some onlookers. "Is the man deranged?" asked Tom Clarke's son-in-law when he heard that his wife's father had bought a second ruin for restoration.<sup>510</sup> "All our friends thought we were barking mad. It was just a pile of masonry. We had to have nerves of steel!"<sup>511</sup> said Lachlan Stuart about Ballone. Judy Steel claimed that "although we might be regarded as mad to embark on the restoration of Aikwood, there were people far madder than us, who had tackled completely roofless, empty shells and made them into homes."<sup>512</sup> Madness, or at least lack of caution, may be one driving force behind the restorers, and it appears in a number of media reports and narratives. However, when they articulate their motivations, the restorers mostly express rather more lofty sentiments to explain why they should take on a huge and challenging building project. Some wanted to be a part of history and feel the continuity: "One of the best things about a place like this is that you feel like you are living and breathing history.....Just by being here, I feel I'm part of a continuing saga,"<sup>513</sup> said Malin Nairn of Niddry. Gillian Clarke, of Kirkhope, talked of legacy as an incentive: "You rush about all your life and perhaps don't make much impact. Kirkhope's restoration will be a small mark that we leave for the future."<sup>514</sup> Peter Hewkin identified a kind of altruism, as well as challenge, as being his motivators: ""It was a challenge, even an obsession," he admits. In his late forties, he had spent his working life in property investment and wanted, as he puts it, "to give something back to the world"".<sup>515</sup>

<sup>509</sup> <http://www.clans-families.org/council-membership.html>

<sup>510</sup> [http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/rec-id-36-cat\\_id-1-highlight-2-words.htm](http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/rec-id-36-cat_id-1-highlight-2-words.htm) accessed November 2010

<sup>511</sup> Isabel Oakeshott 'A Scotswoman's Home Is Her Castle' **Evening News (Edinburgh)** 19 May 1998

<sup>512</sup> Judy Steel 'A Liberal Conversion of History' **The Times** November 7, 1992

<sup>513</sup> Lucy Benyon 'A house less ordinary' April 1 2005 **The Express**

<sup>514</sup> Christian Diamond 'Head for heights in the Borders' **The Times** January 6 1996

<sup>515</sup> No byline 'From crumbling ruin to a castle for keeps' **Daily Telegraph** 13 Mar 2004

Others were touched by the neglect and decay which they observed in the ruins. Jeremy Irons, restorer of Kilcoe in Ireland, "looked with sadness on how it had been ignored and vandalised over the centuries, how the carved window stones had been pushed out and robbed, and how one particular part was near to collapse."<sup>516</sup> "It saddened me that this prominent historic house was sitting there, in danger of crumbling away, needing put back together again,"<sup>517</sup> said Tim Erbe, who bought and extensively repaired Logie Elphinstone. The putting back together of something broken is another theme identified by some restorers: "This desire to repair, restore and to make things work is a strong motivating force. It therefore is logical that I might consider refurbishing a house, particularly if it was a ruin, and, being romantics at heart, my wife Claire and I decided to restore a tower house."<sup>518</sup> Tom Craig of Fawside referred, in the preceding quote, to being 'romantics at heart' and this kind of vision of the self, and of a mediaeval revivalism, was echoed by Judy Corbett in her autobiographical account of the restoration of Gwydir Castle:

We harboured a dream of one day buying a ruinous old mansion and renovating it as accurately as possible and living in it without electricity or any concessions to modern life. My dream was to wear a chatelaine round my waist, and keep wolfhounds and tend bees in some quiet corner of a walled garden. I had a strong sense of the Gothic in me, and neglected houses, in particular, appealed to something deep within my psyche.<sup>519</sup>

The romantic dream motive crops up frequently. Lachlan Rhodes wrote about his motivations for buying Terpersie:

My mother was brought up in a Scottish castle; I've always been a romantic and visited many of the ruined castles of Scotland. I was bought a Castles of Scotland map at university and used that to see the remarkable array of castles and tower houses across Scotland. In particular, the restoration of Tillycairn in Aberdeenshire inspired me; I knew David Lumsden, the owner, and also Ian Cumming, his clerk of works and builder, and the latter nudged me to try to find a similar property. I manoeuvred friends to get me invited to a party where I could meet up with Ian Fellowes-Gordon, who then owned Terpersie, and fortunately it was just at the time he had decided to sell. I put in an offer and bought the place for a very modest sum.<sup>520</sup>

Nicholas Browne, like others (the owners of Rusco, Ballone, Kisimul, Mains), bought a castle as a kind of dream fulfillment: "As a small boy I dreamed that one day I'd live in a castle, with a winding stone stair, battlements and turrets."<sup>521</sup> Graham Cowan, on the other hand, had had no initial dream but was taken by surprise, ambushed almost, at the impact of Glenapp when he first saw it: "It was a completely breathtaking sight – a forgotten place - a sleeping beauty, like the castle in the fairytale that slept for a hundred years."<sup>522</sup> Matthew Parris, too, had not been looking

<sup>516</sup> Jeremy Irons 'Let's Bring A Bit of Warmth To West Cork' **The Irish Times** 30 May 2001

<sup>517</sup> Lorna Robertson: Article about Logie Elphinstone (no title) **Aberdeen Evening Express** October 9, 2009

<sup>518</sup> Tom Craig 'Fawside Castle' in Clow (ed) **Restoring Scotland's Castles**, 123

<sup>519</sup> Judy Corbett **Castles in the Air**, 13

<sup>520</sup> Personal communication by e-mail, 7 December 2009

<sup>521</sup> Nicholas Browne **Castles and Crocodiles**, 15

<sup>522</sup> <http://www.glenappcastle.com/today.htm> accessed March 2011

for a restoration project, but “there was something different about this place: something enchanted. It hit you between the eyes.”<sup>523</sup> Peter Clarke seemed to perceive his ruin as a youthful alternative to romance or sex: “I fell in love with Kirkhope immediately. I was only 18 and hadn't discovered girls yet. It was just a pile of old rubble at the time, but I thought it was the most beautiful and breathtaking thing I'd ever seen.” A couple of owners saw themselves as having *vision*, one being Peter Gillies of Ballencrieff, in a self-righteous kind of way: “When doing a restoration like this, you will either finish it or it will finish you,” he says. “You need to have vision and you need to be prepared to work years ahead of yourself.”<sup>524</sup> James Brown also implied that this was important, although in his case the vision never came to fruition: “Over the ten years I have presented the Baltersan Castle website I have been asked on many occasions what motivated me to pursue the saving of this wonderful historic building. My answer has been simple, “BECAUSE I CAN SEE WHAT IT COULD BECOME.”<sup>525</sup> (capitals as they appear in the original text)

The themes may be divided into two kinds: motives and motifs. Motives are those aspects of the narratives which reveal the primary underlying reasons for the restoration, as exemplified by the quotes above, which come from both media reports and the autobiographical narratives, e.g. romance, dream fulfillment, vision, the rescuing of heritage and ‘madness’. The motifs are by-products of the project, e.g. physical and financial hardship, pride in sourcing materials, lack of prescience, battles with the authorities and anti-modernism, which permeate the narratives and provide the story with dramatic tension. The classifying of the restoring individual owners into six groups in the previous chapter (family heritage; wealthy; middle class; architects; dreamers; entrepreneurs) also represents a thematic approach; within each group different patterns of salience can be seen.

Identification and exploration of the motifs illuminates better the ‘big picture’ of significant factors that preoccupied, troubled or entranced the restorers as a group, without detracting from the rich detail of each individual narrative. Battles with authority feature very prominently; in these cases the media tend to be firmly on the side of castle owners and restorers against the authorities, as was seen in chapter four. However, several restorers stated explicitly that they were helped and supported by Historic Scotland or its predecessor organization. One never knows whether they are telling the ‘whole story’, though. When interviewed by a glossy magazine about the restoration of Barholm, I emphasized our gratitude for the financial support that we had received from Historic Scotland and said nothing about the disagreements we had had, which were, at best, irritating and at times extremely frustrating. This was motivated by a desire not to alienate Historic Scotland through public criticism (after all, they did give us a large sum of money, even if I found the organisation difficult to deal with at times), nor to be seen to air personal grievances in public. Others, for example, Ken Murdoch of Methven, had no such qualms and related their trials with the authorities explicitly and in great detail. The question of finding the

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<sup>523</sup> Parris, 4

<sup>524</sup> Loudon, Monica “The Master of Ballencrieff” **The Scotsman** 9 June 2001

<sup>525</sup> [http://www.baltersan.com/james\\_brown\\_fsa\\_scot](http://www.baltersan.com/james_brown_fsa_scot) accessed Oct 09

‘whole story’ is a vexed one; the ‘truth’ is not out there, waiting to be discovered, but the versions of their stories which these restorers have offered up are both true and authentic in their own terms. A social interactionist perspective is a useful framework for analysis here, with its central idea that people act as they do because of how they define situations and that the meanings they create arise from the construction of self-identity through social interaction.

Lack of prescience is a popular theme; ‘if only we had known....’ is a common phrase used by restorers looking back on a time when they were innocent of the trials ahead. A striving for authenticity in efforts to source materials seen as suitable to fit and furnish their castles is another, such as the 600 hours which David and Leslie Leslie spent learning how to make stained and leaded glass for Castle Leslie’s 55 windows<sup>526</sup>, or the ingenuity displayed at Kirkhope: “Reclaimed materials were sourced to preserve the sense of age, and there is an extensive use of timber, as evident in the flooring and the exposed ceiling beams, while the spiral staircase incorporates an old telegraph pole.”<sup>527</sup> However, as Davis pointed out: “Such interiors, like the restored husks which contain them, do not really represent a scientific reconstruction of the past, detached from the march of time. Instead, they represent a creative revivalist conceit.”<sup>528</sup>

It is also interesting to consider what themes were **not** displayed in the first person narrative accounts. National identity, Scottish pride or a sense of particularly Scottish heritage, which are frequent themes in descriptions of castles in the literature, did not feature much in the personal, domestic accounts of restorations, apart from the ‘lineage’ preoccupations of Robert Macneil of Kisimul and Nicholas Maclean-Bristol of Breachacha and in an interview with Charles Stuart about the restoration of Castle Stuart. It is probably significant that Stuart is a Canadian Scot who returned to Scotland to bring up his family there. “It was certainly risky restoring the castle without owning it, and it proved to be a very costly enterprise, but at the same time I am Scottish, and what better way is there to spend your money than to bring a bit of Scottish history back to life?”<sup>529</sup> Ghosts, a common feature of the popular literature on castles, appear on the Castle Stuart website, which advertises a ghost story book for sale: ‘The Mystery of Castle Stuart’<sup>530</sup>. They only appear in one of the first person narratives: Helen Bailey gave detailed accounts, taking up two chapters (four and thirteen), of the Red Room ghost at Borthwick Castle, which involved university researchers, a television interview and an exorcism by a future Bishop of Edinburgh. The abstract themes of the first person narratives, such as continuity and romance, are often implicit. It is the pragmatic issues and the sheer *effort* of physical work, sourcing authentic materials, managing finances and squaring up to perceived challenges from those in authority that tend to feature prominently and explicitly, for example in Robert Clow’s account of the heavy work at Aiket:

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<sup>526</sup> Frank G. Prial, ‘Staying with a Baron at a Scottish Castle’ **New York Times** November 4, 1990

<sup>527</sup> Fiona Reid ‘High and Mighty’ **The Southern Reporter** 2 June 2005

<sup>528</sup> Davis, 62

<sup>529</sup> Ben West ‘High Cost of Holding the Fort: Upkeep on a castle is hard on the purse but brings its own rewards.’ **The Observer** 11 December 2005, 13

<sup>530</sup> <http://www.castlestuart.com/ghosts.html> accessed December 2010

Katrina and I spent two weeks chipping the old lime mortar off the slates, then sizing them. The largest, "Royals", were often up to two or two foot six inches wide, and very heavy to lift, as they could be one to two inches thick. Fortunately, repetitive strain injury was unheard of in those days, but wrists ached every evening.<sup>531</sup>

The restorers were striving for control over their projects and prized autonomy greatly. Accounts of the history of the restored castles and towers feature in most of the longer first person narratives, (although no extracts are reproduced here), but mainly in the form of descriptive lists of owners and dates, with a marked emphasis on military aspects. A newspaper account of Peter Gillies' initial dismissal of Ballencrieff as a Georgian mansion, followed by his exploration of the ruinous building, in the company of Nigel Tranter, demonstrates the importance of military signs (both in the physical and the semiotic sense) to the would-be restorer:

"We climbed up on top of a big pile of rubble with mature trees growing through it into what we now call the Great Hall," says Peter, "but it wasn't until we climbed down into what were the vaults that we found the evidence we needed - a couple of gun loops (gaps in the wall for defending against invading armies) and part of the old heraldic ceiling - to conclude that this had indeed once been a castle."<sup>532</sup>

Matthew Parris, on the other hand, was much more skeptical when he discovered arrow slits beneath the eaves on first seeing l'Avenç in Spain: "Arrow slits? Why? I knew at once that this house had never really needed them. They were a sort of caprice. The place was cocking a snook at fashion and functionality, unwilling to be bound to epoch or situation."<sup>533</sup> Most of the Scottish castle restorers would undoubtedly have taken a very different view, and immediately have assumed a military purpose, as they did in their own ruins - often mistakenly. Wider issues involving historicity and conservation authenticity, integrity and continuity tend to be ignored or implicit in the narratives; when they are explicit, such as when tales of sourcing authentic materials are related, discussion of the abstract underlying principles is usually absent. These are not academic treatises, but personal stories, after all. The more scholarly approach of Matthew Parris is rare.

The themes of romance, heritage and hardship are amply illustrated in both the media and the first person narratives. The world of castles and castle restorers, as represented by the media, is one of dreams come true and gloomy ruins transformed. "The world presented by the popular Press, like the world we feel we live in, is a culturally organized set of categories."<sup>534</sup> These categories often use stereotypes for the owners and restorers, who are almost universally represented as heroes. The picture is touched with a streak of comedy in the case of Balgonie, which has featured in many interviews and articles about Scottish castle restoration, presumably

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<sup>531</sup> Clow in Clow (ed), 99

<sup>532</sup> Monica Loudon "The Master of Ballencrieff" **The Scotsman** 9 June 2001

<sup>533</sup> Parris, 6

<sup>534</sup> Roger Fowler **Language in the News. Discourse and Ideology in the Press** (1991) Routledge, London, 92



because its owners present a colourful and eccentric picture of life in a Scottish castle, which in turn provides entertaining journalistic copy.<sup>535</sup>

'I don't particularly like the 20th century,' says Stuart Morris. 'I prefer living in the past.' Heavily bearded, pony-tailed, garbed in kilt (the tartan is the family's own design) with several layers of tweed surrounding a well-insulated torso, he gestures across his living room. It is dusty, dingy, cluttered and smelling slightly of damp deerhound, the walls about eight feet thick, with fifty-four heraldic coats of arms painted on the ceiling to represent the previous occupants. 'To me, this is fun,' he says. 'It's an enjoyable thing to do.'<sup>536</sup>

These details which paint an unflattering picture of the appearance of the owner and the castle are unusual in a journalistic interview – and they would be unlikely to appear in a first person narrative, of course. The representation of Peter Gillies' discovery of Ballencrieff Castle in the *Edinburgh Evening News* is much more positive, as well as being dramatic and exciting. Peter is 'king of the castle', as well as being 'archaeologist, construction worker and detective'. He overcame all sorts of difficulties to rescue his 'dream ruin'.

You don't have to be a king to live in a castle - Peter Gillies had to be an archaeologist, construction worker and detective before he could move in to his, says Monica Loudon. Airy loft apartments and snug mews flats come and go, but a castle is for keeps. As long as you manage to find one, that is. Peter Gillies did, but only just. In fact, it took a last-minute phone call from a famous historian to stop his dream ruin being reduced to a pile of rubble. The drama began when Peter had a chance encounter with the late writer and historian Nigel Tranter while out walking. "I've always been interested in castles," explains Peter, "and Nigel's five-volume set of books on Scottish castles was like my bible. I told him I was interested in restoration and asked him to let me know if he ever heard of a castle for sale."<sup>537</sup>

The story of the restoration of Ballone Castle, 'the ancient Highland seat of the clan MacKenzie', by Lachlan and Annie Stewart was presented in equally dramatic and clichéd language:

Towering over a tiny bay on the rugged coast of Easter Ross, the once mighty fortress had fallen victim to the bitter salt wind and the piercing rain. Centuries of neglect had taken their toll - and the local farmer, who owned the land on which it lay had long since abandoned it to its fate. But for the couple, who met at Edinburgh College of Art, and now own a design shop in the Capital, finding Ballone Castle was like unearthing treasure. Camped out in the tiny bothy in the lee of the ruin, they've spent the last eight years restoring it to its former glory. Stone by stone, the ancient Highland seat of the clan MacKenzie is gradually becoming a stunning 20th century home.<sup>538</sup>

Ancient stones featured, too, in the account of the restoration of Castle Leslie in the *New York Times*, which presented a picture of overwhelming quantities and associated difficulties:

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<sup>535</sup> A video interview with the Laird of Balgonie, Raymond Morris, is available on You Tube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPCKGTETYGMAccessed> November 2010

<sup>536</sup> No byline 'A Scotsman's castle is his home' *The Birmingham Magazine* (Birmingham University), 1997

<sup>537</sup> Monica Loudon 'The Master of Ballencrieff' **The Scotsman** 9 June 2001

<sup>538</sup> Oakeshott, Isabel 'A Scotswoman's Home Is Her Castle' 19 May 1998 **Evening News (Edinburgh)**



Suddenly the Leslies found themselves the owners of an enormous ruin, abandoned since the 19th century. For months afterward, in snow, sleet and freezing rain, the Leslies clambered over the icy ancient stones. They knew that most of the walls had collapsed; they discovered that much of what was still standing was ready to fall, too. In one spot, a full-sized tree had grown atop a broken parapet. There were tons of stone and rubble inside the roofless walls; in some places the piles were eight feet high. "We organized 'rubble rallies' and lured our friends out to help remove the stuff," Mr. Leslie said. Additional tons of carved stone had been stolen over the centuries and used to build local farms, buildings and homes. The remains of four stone cottages on a nearby estate were hauled to the site, to be incorporated back into walls they may have been part of three centuries before<sup>539</sup>

Amongst all media articles it is, of course, the headlines that make the immediate impact. Sub editors find rich pickings in the vocabulary of castles to demonstrate their usual fondness for puns, e.g.: *A Scot's Home is his Castle – even if he has to build it; Our Home is Our Castle; Be King of your own tiny castle; Turret Syndrome; Our Tower of Strength; Fantasy Fortress; For some people happiness is a life in ruins*<sup>540</sup> and so forth. Footnote references from quotes throughout the thesis and the bibliography contain many more ingenious, witty and amusing examples. The overwhelming message is positive; one can hardly imagine a headline such as *Fool buys crumbling ruin - better left to rot*. Unlike the first person narratives, which are under the control of the narrator, there is an unspoken contract between interviewer and interviewee, which supposes that the latter will deliver material that is interesting enough to absorb readers' attention and that the former will faithfully reproduce what has been said, at least in spirit. In interviews, the words of the restorers will have been tempered by the audience of the journalist and should be read in that context. They are not the same words as might have been framed writing in solitude and choosing the tone and the words reflectively, nor are they even necessarily a verbatim account of what was said. If the interviewee does not deliver gripping quotes, the journalist may have to spice up the interview content with more titillating material conjured from the imagination. Newspaper interviews often contain factual misinformation about the buildings; sometimes this will have been provided by an owner who is mistaken about its architectural history and sometimes it is based on careless assumptions on the part of the journalist.

A nice illustration of changing versions of 'truth' and reality is reflected in interviews which Peter Gillies gave to journalists, the first in 1999: "Ballencrieff was much grander than we'd visualised, but now we wouldn't leave unless we got too old to climb up and down the stairs!"<sup>541</sup> In 2001 he claimed, "Once you really get into castles, it is hard to let go. Given the money and the chance, I would set about restoring another tomorrow. They are an obsession, a drug."<sup>542</sup> But in 2005: "The house is far too big for the two of us - we want a simpler life. We love it to pieces and are

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<sup>539</sup> Prial, Frank G. 'Staying with a Baron at a Scottish Castle' November 4, 1990 **New York Times**

<sup>540</sup> **The Herald**, 22 April 2004; **Home Plus Scotland**, October 2002; **The Sunday Times**, December 19 2004; **The Sunday Herald**, June 16 2002; **The Herald**, 30 June 2001; **The Sunday Times**, 27 March 2005; **Evening News (Edinburgh)** 4 November 1999

<sup>541</sup> Fiona Reid 'For some people happiness is a life in ruins' **Evening News** 4 November 1999

<sup>542</sup> Monica Loudon 'The Master of Ballencrieff' **The Scotsman** 9 June 2001

reluctantly moving.”<sup>543</sup> They put it on the market (probably long before they were too old to climb stairs), at an asking price of £975,000. People change their minds as their situation changes; perhaps Peter Gillies subsequently restored another castle elsewhere with the proceeds.

MOTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Romance and anti-modernism</li> <li>• Heritage / continuity</li> <li>• Adventure / fun</li> <li>• Dream fulfillment</li> <li>• Rescue mission</li> </ul>
MOTIFS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical hardship</li> <li>• Financial hardship / risk</li> <li>• Battles with the authorities</li> <li>• Sourcing original materials</li> <li>• Troubles with neighbours / the seller</li> <li>• Lack of prescience</li> <li>• Need for control</li> <li>• Madness</li> </ul>

**Table 19 The Main Themes of the Narratives, Divided by Motives and Motifs**

## THE CASE STUDIES

It is the conversion of private Trouble into public plight that makes well-wrought narrative so powerful, so comforting, so dangerous, so culturally essential.<sup>544</sup>

The fifteen case studies all have a coherent first person narrative of the restoration contained within at least one published written document. Three Scottish castle restoration narratives (Borthwick, Kinkell and Methven) are the subject of full-length published books, and these, naturally, contain the most detail about the building projects and illustrate the themes in the greatest depth. The others are chapters within books, journal or magazine articles or Internet accounts, of varying lengths. Nicholas Maclean Bristol’s account of the restoration of Breachacha

<sup>543</sup> Ben Flanagan ‘Where you can live in the past’ **The Observer** 20 November 2005

<sup>544</sup> Jerome Bruner Making **Stories. Law, Literature, Life** (2002) Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 35

takes up only a few paragraphs in his 700 page book about Maclean clan history<sup>545</sup> but it is nonetheless a significant contribution to the castle restoration narratives. Although the tone varies from narrator to narrator – a lyrical tone is adopted by some of the restorer-narrators, notably Helen Bailey and Nicholas Fairbairn, whereas self-deprecation or pragmatism characterize others, such as Ken Murdoch or L.A.L. Rolland – pleasure and pride in achievement are consistently recognizable throughout the various accounts. These narratives are also characterized by a common thread of derring-do and eventual triumph over adversity, particularly in terms of fights fought and won against those in authority. Extremes of difficulties are described, where owner restorers risked their safety and undertook feats of endurance on an epic scale, such as George Jamieson's laying of 5,000 roof slates and external pointing of Cramond Tower using a mountaineering harness, in order to save scaffolding the building.<sup>546</sup> In the first person narratives, the owner restorers are able to present and control their 'side' of the story, without interruption or reinterpretation by editors or journalists. Beyond Scotland, five book length personal accounts of castle restoration have been found – one in Wales, two in Ireland, one in Spain and one in France. The themes they display are remarkably similar to those of the Scottish accounts; it seems that the restoration narrative has a universal voice.

Are these fifteen representative of all restorations of Scottish castles during the period? In the range of types of owner and size and type of buildings they do reflect the variety of projects which were carried out overall. But, as with all self-selecting groups, the sample is skewed, in that these are all successful projects, carried out by articulate owners who wished to 'go public' with the story of what they had done, and who may have inspired others by doing so. All of them have a story with elements of dramatic tension, conflict and resolution and human interest. Other restorers may have been less successful and/or less willing to have their story in the public domain, or simply have less time or inclination to write up and publish their account. In that sense, these cannot be claimed to be absolutely 'typical'. However, the first person narratives do cover a spectrum of different locations, types of building, types of owner, date of rebuilding and end use, so that as a set, they illustrate a wide range of projects, as can be seen in tables 20 and 21.

Analyzing qualitative data, such as narratives, can be problematic, and the temptation is always to look for a quantitative methodology. However, no software or protocols have been used as tools for the narrative analysis; protocols generally heavily constrain the parameters of the information that can be extracted from the data. This is acceptable if the population or extracts are homogeneous and fit within an easily standardized framework, for example the Narrative Assessment Protocol (NAP) developed to assess children's spoken narrative language abilities,<sup>547</sup> but not suitable for extracts representing a wide variety of voices and audience, such as in this

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<sup>545</sup> Nicholas Maclean-Bristol **From Clan to Regiment. Six Hundred Years in the Hebrides 1400 – 2000** Pen and Sword Books Ltd, Barnsley

<sup>546</sup> Eric Jamieson 'The rebuilding of Cramond Tower' **SCA Journal** issue 11

<sup>547</sup> Kara Phence, Laura Justice and Carolyn Gosse **NAP Narrative Assessment Protocol** (2008) Preschool Language and Literacy Lab, University of Virginia

<http://preschoollab.osu.edu/nap/resources/training-coding-guidlines.pdf> accessed November 2010

research. Indeed, there exists no published protocol, software or assessment tool which would readily fit the complex data in this thesis.

The narratives here are written to inform and entertain and do not purport to be ‘literature’ in the grand sense of the word. Of the three full length books, Laing’s has endured the longest and gone through two editions. Although it is out of print it is readily available secondhand. Laing has understood the nature of some of the big questions which can be raised about restoration (for example, where and when to stop and how to use the space created with artistry) and addressed them thoughtfully. Bailey’s book is out of print and very difficult to find. Like Laing’s it is an adventure story, but the narrative is an ‘action’ story, with less attempt to analyse deeper issues of motivation. Murdoch’s book is a series of handwritten entries from his diaries of twenty years previously, combined with current reflections on the past, with little narrative structure; the real charm of the book lies in the beautiful water colour illustrations of the stages of the restoration, which form a kind of visual narrative of the process. It is tempting to allow the longer narratives to have a louder voice, to speak on behalf of all restorers and have their themes dominate; every effort has been made to keep a balance between the shorter, less articulate accounts and those whose writing flows easily and not to judge the latter as somehow more authentic or truthful. Inevitably, however, those who wrote more provide a richer pool of data for analysis. All the narratives give sufficient detail for the reader to build up an imagined picture of the restoration process, although only very small extracts are copied here, and together they allow comparison of the similarities and differences between them.

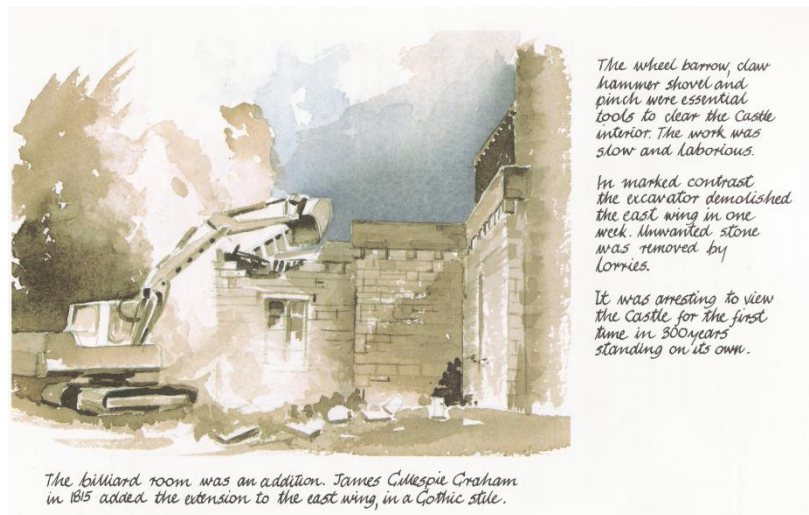


FIGURE 59 METHVEN CASTLE RESTORATION IN PROGRESS<sup>548</sup>

The narratives were all written by new owners, and they are grouped according to the owner types identified in chapter three, section two, since they tend to exemplify different themes, although not necessarily as a group. Under each castle heading a short factual description of the context provides names, dates, size and other relevant details, followed by a number of

<sup>548</sup> Ken Murdoch **Methven Castle**, 45

quotations from the narrative, with linking comments to highlight the themes. One striking difference between the early and later narratives is in the prose style. The narratives about Kisimul and Fordell were written in the 1960s and use rather flowery language which strikes as overblown today. Amongst the authors, styles certainly differ as one might expect with such a wide variety of backgrounds. Some are prosaic, others reflective. In terms of general content, variations in the themes generally reflect the preoccupations engendered by the situations in which the restorers found themselves - those on a tight budget or with hostile neighbours, say, wrote more about those issues.

Five of the narratives come from the same volume<sup>549</sup>, as part of the proceedings of the conference *Restoring Scotland's Castles* held in Glasgow in 1991, and therefore the structure of each is similar. These written narratives had previously been spoken aloud and addressed to a 'real' audience of conference attendees, rather than the imagined one of most written stories and this will have influenced their tone, which often seems both conspiratorial and all-revealing, but may in reality have been tempered by the immediacy of the audience. Thirteen of the narratives - all except for Helen Bailey's and Judy Steel's - are written by men, despite the fact that ten of them had wives who shared in the project at the time of the restoration (in two cases it is unknown whether a wife or partner was involved, and one was undertaken by a firm of architects rather than a private individual). Helen Bailey, who did not have a husband, but did have an incompetent male business partner for part of the project, has written one of the most 'gung ho' of the narratives, showing extreme levels of financial risk-taking. All of the restorers are Scottish or at least have lived in Scotland for most of their lives, apart from John Coyne of Tilquhillie Castle, who is American, and his wife, who is Norwegian, and the American wife of Gerald Laing of Kinkell. Missing from this section is the very brief account of Tom Clarke, (who is English), of his restorations of Kilmartin and Lochhouse; this has already been reproduced in part in chapter three. The table below gives an overview of the first-person narratives. The wide range of locations, dates, sizes, end uses and selling owners is representative of the many variables involved in the castle restoration projects. None of the owners here, however, except possibly Nicholas Fairbairn, used a contractor to organize and oversee the rebuilding; all acted as their own project managers.

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<sup>549</sup> They are: Aiket, Fawside, Mains, Rusco and Tilquhillie in Clow **Restoring Scotland's Castles**

Castle	Location	Owner	Date	Size	End use	Seller
Kisimul	Western Isles	Macneil	1956 - 71	Small	Home/ clan centre	Old family
Fordell	Fife	Fairbairn	1961 - 7	Medium	Home	Businessman
Breachacha	Western Isles	Maclean-Bristol	1965 - ?	Medium	Charity centre	Old owner
Kinkell	Highland	Laing	1969-70	Small	Home	Farmer
Borthwick	Midlothian	Bailey	1972	Large	Hotel	Old family
Rossend	Fife	Architects	1975	Medium	Offices	Council
Rusco	Galloway	Carson	1975 – 9	Small	Home	Old family
Fawside	E. Lothian	Craig	1976-82	Medium	Home	Farmer
Aiket	Ayrshire	Clow	1976 - 80	Small	Home	Restorer
Cramond	Edinburgh	Jamison	1978	Small	Home	Old family
Methven	Perthshire	Murdoch	1984-5	Medium	Offices	Farmer
Mains	Lanarkshire	Rowan	1985	Small	Home	Farmer
Aikwood	Borders	Steel	1990 – 2	Medium	Home	Old family
Tilquhillie	Aberdeen	Coyne	1991	Medium	Home	Old family
Glenapp	Ayrshire	Cowan	1994-2000	Large	Hotel	Business

**Table 20 Overview of the restoration projects with first person narratives, in chronological order according to date of starting to rebuild**

The range of locations, dates, sizes, end uses and sellers can clearly be seen from this overview.

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Family status</b>	<b>'type'</b>	<b>Architect</b>
Macneil (Kisimul)	Architect &?	Married couple	Heritage & Architect	Self
Nicholas & Elizabeth Fairbairn (Fordell)	Solicitor, politician & ?	Married couple	Wealthy	?
Maclean-Bristol (Breachacha)	Army officer &?	Married couple	Heritage	?
Gerald & Galina Laing (Kinkell)	Sculptor & artist	Married couple	Middle class	Wittets of Elgin
Helen Bailey (Borthwick)	Businesswoman	Single woman	Entrepreneur	Martin Dalglish
Architects firm (Rossend)	Architects	Business	Architect	Self
Graham & Buffy Carson (Rusco)	Businessman & Speech Therapist	Married couple	Middle class	Bill Jack
Tom & Claire Craig (Fawside)	Engineer & ?	Married couple	Middle class & Dreamer	Ian Parsons
Robert & Katrina Clow (Aiket)	Publisher & ?	Married couple	Middle class	None
Eric & George Jamieson (Cramond)	Taxidermist (son)	Father & son	Middle class	Ian Begg
Ken & Anna Murdoch (Methven)	Architect & ?	Married couple	Architect	Self
Mike & Pavla Rowan (Mains)	Musician & ?	Married couple	Middle class	John Wetten Brown
David & Judy Steel (Aikwood)	Politician & Author	Married couple	Middle class	Malcolm Hammond
John & Kay Coyne (Tilquhillie)	American Diplomat & ?	Married couple	Middle class	Frans Smoor
Graham & Fay Cowan (Glenapp)	Vet & Hotel Manager	Married couple	Entrepreneur	?

**Table 21 Overview of the restorers who wrote first person narratives and their architects**

In terms of the ‘types’ of restorers identified in chapter three (in the ‘new owners’ section), it can be seen from the table above that two were family heritage restorers, one was a wealthy owner, nine were middle class professionals, three were architects, one was a ‘dreamer’ and two were entrepreneurs, which is not dissimilar to the overall proportions of the types across all restorations. In that sense, the case studies can be claimed to be representative. The case studies here contain direct quotes from the narrative sources, in order to try to avoid what Berkhofer terms ‘scholarly plagiarism’, which “through paraphrase fuses the author’s words with words from past remains in present narrative and argument. The ability to paraphrase or to summarize is the power to reconstrue and to misrepresent what was given in the sources”<sup>550</sup> The quoted extracts from owners’ accounts are, of necessity, highly selective, and there is inevitably some *précis* and interpretation of the authors’ accounts, although every attempt has been made not to misrepresent what they said and/or intended. There is a large number of case studies – the fifteen first person narratives represent **all** of the available sources in that genre - but it was felt to be important to present extracts from all of these primary sources, in order to demonstrate the full range of experiences, motivations and justifications of the restorers.

Jacques Derrida famously said “il n’y a pas d’hors texte” and some deconstructionist followers have taken this to mean that the text is the **only** thing that matters; in this research, context is seen as essential to an understanding of the discourse represented in the texts, as is the authorial presence, argued in the preamble. The narratives themselves, however insightful and comprehensive, are not *sufficient* to represent the wider perspective needed to understand this second ‘renaissance’ of Scottish castles – but it is argued that they are *necessary*. The first person narratives illustrate a range of themes, along with a range of project types and characteristics. Heritage is an important focus of Kisimul and Breachacha; financial difficulties feature in the accounts of Fawside, Rusco, Aiket and Borthwick; Glenapp and Borthwick were both huge scale projects which emphasise pride in achievement and triumph over adversity. The achievements are listed against a backcloth of horrors (dangerously crumbling masonry, feats of physical strength), with great ingenuity displayed in sourcing materials for the rebuilding. Adversity is played out in physical hardship, lengthy negotiations to buy the castles and battles with the authorities once the work is planned and/or begun.

N.B. In addition to the case studies in this chapter, a published first person narrative about Barholm Castle (written before I had any thought of carrying out this research) and also a magazine article which was the result of a journalistic interview are reproduced in appendix 8 in full.

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<sup>550</sup> Berkhofer, 149



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KISIMUL

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FIGURE 60 KISIMUL CASTLE<sup>551</sup>

This formerly forlorn ruin was the first thing seen upon entering the castle. Now it is a pleasure to behold.....I am indeed grateful that my boyhood dreams have come true.<sup>552</sup>

Kisimul is described by HS as ‘the only significant surviving medieval castle in the Western Isles’<sup>553</sup> and is situated on a tiny islet off the island of Barra. It had been burned out in 1795 and much of the stone removed and/or destroyed in the nineteenth century. Kisimul was owned by the Macneils until 1838, when it was sold to pay off debts. Robert Lister Macneil, an American architect who had been officially recognized as the Chief of the Clan Macneil by the Lord Lyon in 1915, managed to buy the Barra Estate and Kisimul Castle in 1937 from the estate of Lady Cathcart (who had refused to sell to him during her lifetime, despite his pleading) with the help of his second wife’s money and clan donations. Robert Lister saw the acquisition of Kisimul as part of his destiny, his ‘life’s goal’. As was described in chapter one, the repair and restoration of Kisimul began in 1937, but the work was interrupted by WW2. The restoration proper began in 1957; the story was told by Robert Lister Macneil in his book’s last chapter, entitled *The Castle Lives Again*.<sup>554</sup> He drew his own master plan for the castle and had it blue-printed in 1938. “I did think of Kisimul as if I were going to awaken it from a long sleep and give it renewed life, a secure life which would continue through future centuries and, I hoped, make the castle pleasurable and inspiring to many generations.”<sup>555</sup> In this quote Macneil personifies the castle and emphasizes the theme of continuity, both from the past and into the future. The preface to the reprinted edition contains a number of waspish comments from his son, however: “The Castle restoration was a

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<sup>551</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kisimul\\_Castle.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kisimul_Castle.jpg) photograph by Paul Store

<sup>552</sup> Macneil, 188

<sup>553</sup> [http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/propertyresults/propertyoverview.htm?PropID=PL\\_189&PropName=Kisimul%20Castle](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/propertyresults/propertyoverview.htm?PropID=PL_189&PropName=Kisimul%20Castle)

<sup>554</sup> Macneil *Castle in the Sea*

<sup>555</sup> Ibid, 159

truly significant contribution to the economy and morale of Barra, but one offered in a spirit unlikely to invoke a warm response from the community.”<sup>556</sup> It appears that Ian Roderick Macneil judged his father’s behaviour as somewhat arrogant and egocentric.

In 1956, just before the restoration work proper began, Macneil received a royal visit, which would doubtless have thrilled his sense of the importance of his project. The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and Princess Margaret came to Kisimul on August 14<sup>th</sup>:

The Queen and the Duke asked my wife and myself many questions about Kisimul Castle. The Duke asked me what I intended to do with the castle and I told him “I hope to live in it, if I live long enough, and to make it the clan centre.” He replied by asking me if I knew about Maclean of Duart, who started restoration of his castle when he was about seventy and lived in it until he was nearly one hundred and one years old. I said I was trying to equal Maclean of Duart’s record.<sup>557</sup>

Despite Macneil’s plan for longevity at Kisimul, Michael Davis claimed that was not a practicality: “Scarcely intended for modern occupation and certainly not suited to it, Kisimul was simply patched up and some domestic buildings within the courtyard were rebuilt for occasional residence.”<sup>558</sup> In 1957, when the restoration work began, conditions were hard:

Everything seemed in a conspiracy to make the undertaking difficult. The weather, generally, was very bad. Time after time we had severe gales and driving rains, and there was literally no shelter of any kind in the entire castle, not one spot where we could stand or sit out of the pouring rain or strong winds. All the workmen and I regularly wore heavy oilskins – when we could lay them aside was the exception and not the rule. Despite these trying conditions we went steadily ahead with the work.<sup>559</sup>

Macneil’s story is a ‘ripping yarn’, with elements of heritage, clan continuity, Highland welcome, dramatic rescue, battling the elements and visiting royalty. It represents adventure and romance, ‘boyhood dreams come true’ and must have been an inspiring read for interested Macneil clan members in the 1960s.

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## BREACHACHA

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The weather was good and the Island was magical. I decided that this was where I wanted to spend my life. Hughie also took me to see the Castle. It stood gaunt, roofless and empty. No one had lived in it since 1750; apart from my family no one had ever lived there; it had never been blown up or burnt down; it had just decayed quietly like an old warrior once his active life was over.<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>556</sup> Ibid, Preface page 2

<sup>557</sup> ibid, 171

<sup>558</sup> Davis, **Scottish Baronial**, 57

<sup>559</sup> Macneil, 170

<sup>560</sup> Nicholas Maclean-Bristol **From Clan to Regiment**, 663



FIGURE 61 BREACHACHA CASTLE<sup>561</sup>

Breachacha Castle is a large fifteenth to seventeenth century stronghold on the Island of Coll in the Western Isles, which had been ruinous since 1750 when Major Maclean-Bristol bought it in 1961. Like Robert Lister-Macneil, Nicholas Maclean-Bristol had had a childhood vision of buying back the family castle. His great grandfather thirteen times removed had built Breachacha, which was sold out of the family in 1856, and Nicholas Maclean-Bristol had decided at the age of eight that he would buy it back one day. He did so aged twenty-one.<sup>562</sup> This is Maclean's description of his first visit to Coll in the early 1960s:

But was Breacachadh's use over? Could it be restored? I knew of Sir Fitzroy Maclean's restoration of Duart and MacNeill of Barra's at Kishmul. I decided that I would take on the third restoration of a mediaeval Hebridean castle. Kenneth Stewart, who had inherited the Coll estate, and who I met on my first visit to the Island, was prepared to sell Breacachadh Castle to me and shortly after I became ADC it became mine.<sup>563</sup>

Sir Fitzroy Maclean had been determined to purchase and restore Duart Castle since a family holiday to Scotland in the 1870s. In 1911 he finally achieved his aim and bought the ruined castle and 300 acres from Mrs Guthrie, the widow of Mr Murray Guthrie, who had inherited the estate from an uncle<sup>564</sup>. Maclean-Bristol might also have mentioned Colonel MacRae Gilstrap, who restored Eilean Donan with the help of a rich wife's money from 1912 - 1932. These four restorations (Duart, Kisimul, Eilean Donan and Breachacha) sit apart from the 'new' owners

<sup>561</sup> <http://www.macleanoftcoll.com/38801.html> accessed January 2011

<sup>562</sup> Personal communication; telephone conversation 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008

<sup>563</sup> Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, 663

<sup>564</sup> [http://www.duartcastle.com/castle/castle\\_restoration.html](http://www.duartcastle.com/castle/castle_restoration.html) accessed November 2010

projects in their focus on clan continuity and the regaining of a Highland birthright. Their buildings, too, were different from the simple towers which comprised the majority of individual restorations, being older and much more complex in their construction history.

Since I bought Breacachadh I had been trying to work out what I would do with it. Certainly I wanted it to be the home for my wife and children if and when I got married, but I also saw it as the centre of an international organization. I knew from my study of Maclean history that many Collachs, who had gone overseas, had been remarkably successful. They had first left as mercenary soldiers, then as colonists and finally as soldiers in the British army. Was there something in Coll's environment that could inspire a new generation in Britain to serve overseas, and return to enrich their own communities?<sup>565</sup>

As well as a vision of family continuity, like Macneill of Kisimul, Nicholas Maclean-Bristol had another vision for the future, a vision which he realized through setting up Project Trust in 1967. This is an educational charity which sends young people overseas to work as volunteers alongside needy communities and to learn from them.<sup>566</sup> Between 1967 and 2007 almost 6,000 young people worked in over fifty countries. All had to go to Coll for an initial selection course and a debriefing, and in the early years, before additional accommodation was built, they lodged in Breachacha Castle with Nicholas Maclean-Bristol and his wife, Lavinia. This is the only example of an individual restoring owner using the castle for good in the community and the only end use which involved a charitable educational purpose.



FIGURE 62 BREACHACHA RESTORATION 1970S<sup>567</sup>

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## FORDELL

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"We moved into one habitable room on the top floor and with the rude essentials of life, chairs, tables, beds, warmth and happiness, we gradually fought our way out of it, demolishing and restoring as we worked."<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>565</sup> Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, 665

<sup>566</sup> <http://www.projecttrust.org.uk/> accessed December 2010

<sup>567</sup> Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, plate 16

<sup>568</sup> Nicholas Fairbairn **A Life is Too Short**, 164



FIGURE 63 NICHOLAS & SAM FAIRBAIRN IN FORDELL CASTLE<sup>569</sup>

Fordell Castle dates from the sixteenth century and is the only example of a tower house with two main stairs, each with its own door to the outside<sup>570</sup>. It was bought in 1961 by Nicholas Fairbairn, a flamboyant and controversial advocate, sometime Solicitor-General for Scotland and Scottish Tory politician (1933 – 1995). It was inhabited at the time by a woman whom Fairbairn described as an ‘inebriated chatelaine’. Fordell in 1961 was ‘half-constructed, half-dilapidated’ and a ‘slum’, but it did have a roof and internal walls, floors and ceilings. Fairbairn moved in immediately after his wedding to Elizabeth MacKay. He gave over ten pages in his autobiography, *A Life is Too Short*, to a narrative of his restoration of Fordell castle, in which he, like Robert Macneil of Kisimul, conveys a sense of adventure and a fight against the elements. It is not clear whether Fairbairn himself was physically involved in the building work, despite his use of ‘we’. He expresses his lack of prescience in this quote:

Had I known the extent of the task of the resurrection on which I was embarking, I would perhaps never have undertaken it at all, but is that not true of all in life?... And so the great work continued, sometimes fast and sometime slowly. The final event was the pointing of the outside. We erected scaffolding – in a high wind I remember – and pointed the whole exterior. It was a daunting task, but it had its reward in completion; I never want to erect scaffolding again, and I pay my tribute to those who erect and work on it.... Thus Fordell was restored with great pain and much love for the second time in its history. So the great fortress had become alive again, a great and glorious stone womb in which to collect and worship beautiful and amusing things, to give joy and delight to all who visit the ancient fortalice. Every man’s home is his castle. For me my castle is my home but more it is the very

<sup>569</sup> Lesley Astaire, Roddy Martine and Fritz von der Schulenburg **Living in Scotland** (1997) Thames and Hudson Limited, London, 110

<sup>570</sup> John Gifford, **Fife**, 227

expression of my soul within and without. And every year we extend and enlarge the idyllic nature of the house and garden for all to enjoy.<sup>571</sup>

Fairbairn's language is lyrical throughout, full of metaphor, glorifying the building and loosely describing it both as a 'great fortress' and an 'ancient fortalice'. It is reminiscent of the language used by Queen Marie of Romania, another wealthy owner with a romantic disposition, about her restoration of Castle Bran (see chapter two, *European castles*). Fordell Castle is personified and becomes a 'great and glorious stone womb' in which Fairbairn lived until his death in 1995, although by then he had a second wife, Sam, living with him. In 1987 Fordell featured in *Living in Scotland*, a sumptuously illustrated coffee table book about twenty-eight special homes. Fordell was described in only slightly less flowery language as a 'personal paradise and refuge':

Some twenty years ago, Nicholas Fairbairn.....purchased a crumbling castle in Fife for the kind of sum which nowadays might buy a reasonable overcoat. [Nicholas Fairbairn's predecessor, a local businessman, had paid one hundred pounds for Fordell in 1952, when he bought it from Lord Attlee, Earl of Buckinghamshire.] Since then, love, dedication and physical effort have transformed this 14<sup>th</sup> century Clan Henderson keep into a personal paradise and a refuge from his often controversial political and legal life. An accomplished artist and admirer of beautiful things Fairbairn takes as much pride in his disciplined garden as in the interiors of Fordell Castle, which he has filled with eccentric acquisitions and personal memorabilia.<sup>572</sup>

Fairbairn is the only one of the wealthy restorers who wrote a narrative about his restoration, but the section on Fordell is short and contains more rhetoric than detail. It is clear, though, both from what he wrote and the reported passage above, that Fairbairn viewed his castle residence both as a reflection of his personal identity and as a bulwark against the outside world.

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## AIKET

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Starting before we were married, and over a period of fifteen years, my wife and I must have visited nearly every tower house in the central belt of Scotland. I think that after two years of marriage it had finally dawned on her that I wished to restore and live in a tower.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>571</sup> Fairbairn, 166-7

<sup>572</sup> Astaire et al *Living in Scotland*, 110

<sup>573</sup> Clow in Clow 88





FIGURE 64 AIKET<sup>574</sup>

Aiket Tower, in Ayrshire, is a small to medium sized late 15<sup>th</sup> century tower with a late 16<sup>th</sup> century addition, which was reduced in height in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. When Robert and Katrina Clow purchased it for restoration from another would-be restorer in 1976, it was derelict, having been burned down in 1957. They were both members of various heritage committees and had already restored an abandoned mediaeval house in France before they bought Aiket, which was a kind of dream fulfillment. Robert Clow, who worked in publishing, edited and published the volume of collected narratives from the proceedings of the conference *Restoring Scotland's Castles* held in Glasgow in 1991, which includes the chapters on Fawside, Mains, Rusco and Tilquhillie that are case studies in this section.

The Clows were heavily involved in the rebuilding work, both administratively and physically. Robert Clow acted as his own site supervisor and architect, retaining strict control over the project: "I visited the site each evening, in order to check on what might have to be altered next day. In addition, I arrived on site at 8am every morning, in order to effect any alterations that we perceived were necessary, after the previous evening's observations."<sup>575</sup> In his account he railed against Historic Buildings Council, which he found dilatory and difficult: "The delay in obtaining the second listed building consent had cost us an additional £20,000, which we could ill afford, and at that time no one could foresee the subsequent years of inflation."<sup>576</sup>

The risks taken by Robert Clow were physical as well as financial:

I set up a ladder on the roof slabs, tied a rope around my waist, using the Scout's traditional bowline, and attached it to one of the rafters beyond the window which led onto the lower roof.

<sup>574</sup> <http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/JBS-castle-sketches.php> accessed January 2011

<sup>575</sup> Ibid, 90

<sup>576</sup> Ibid, 92

Had I slipped the knot would have held, but our builder advised me that without a harness the rope would have broken my spine.<sup>577</sup>

The themes illustrated in Clow's account include physical and financial hardship and dream fulfillment; in many ways it is a very typical story of a castle restoration project in Scotland in the 1970s, with an emphasis on the personal involvement of the owners in the rebuilding.

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## CRAMOND

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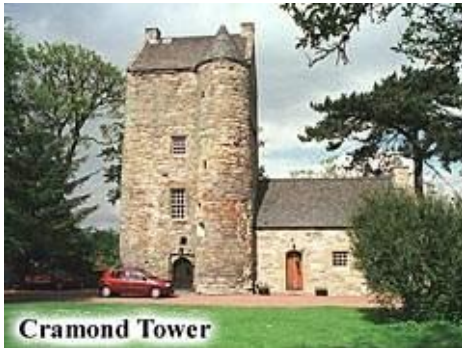


FIGURE 65 CRAMOND TOWER<sup>578</sup>

We had not fully foreseen what the project would involve, both in terms of tedious manual labour, and even more tedious and frustrating hours of letter writing and negotiation. Before the work had been completed, the Cramond Tower restoration correspondence files contained no fewer than 453 letters, proving that, although the physical skills were important, only perseverance finally enabled the end result to be achieved.<sup>579</sup>

Like Nicholas Fairbairn, Eric Jamieson bemoaned a lack of prescience at the enormity of the task which he undertook. Cramond Tower is a small sixteenth century building which was probably originally part of a larger complex and was part of a residence of the Bishops of Dunkeld<sup>580</sup>. It sits on the outskirts of Edinburgh. Eric Jamieson and his son, George, bought it in 1978, with the initial intention of undertaking the restoration as a hobby:

It seemed a pity that such a unique building should be allowed to succumb to the twin ravages of time and vandalism, and I began to make enquiries regarding its ownership with a view to acquiring and restoring it.....As an amateur antiquarian my original intention, when I bought the tower in 1978, had been to manage the project as a hobby, with no particular timescale, but then my eldest son saw the restored tower as a place in which he could live and carry on his work as a wildlife artist and a taxidermist, and he inspired a new degree of urgency for the task.<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>577</sup> Ibid, 100

<sup>578</sup> <http://www.scottish-taxidermy.co.uk/pages/cramondtower.htm> accessed 2011

<sup>579</sup> Eric Jamieson 'The rebuilding of Cramond Tower' **SCA Journal** issue 11

<sup>580</sup> John Gifford, Colin McWilliam and David Walker **Edinburgh** (The Buildings of Scotland) (1991) Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 549

<sup>581</sup> Eric Jamieson 'The rebuilding of Cramond Tower' **SCA Journal** issue 11



Not that it was quick. Nearly two years were spent on acquiring the building from the previous owners, the legatees of the late Mrs Craigie-Halkett, and obtaining the necessary permissions. This was followed by a further four years of part-time work before residence was possible. The architect was Ian Begg or Robert Hurd and Partners<sup>582</sup> There were difficulties during the building work, as well as before, and the usual stories of risk and physical hardship: "Vandalism was rife, during the early phases and to avoid the use of unattended scaffolding - an invitation to daring hooligans - my son carried out much of the external pointing and the laying of 5000 old Scots slates from the safety of his mountaineering harness."<sup>583</sup>

Jamieson's account emphasizes the perseverance needed to complete a castle restoration project and also the amount of paperwork it generates – Barholm's file is probably even thicker, and most restoring owners doubtless gathered equally large stashes of correspondence. Staying power in the face of obstacles was an essential attribute. But Jamieson enjoyed the DIY project, and took pride in it, despite the difficulties:

It would not be true, however, to imply that the work was wholly laborious. There were days of brilliant sunshine when everyone just sat around on the flat roof, level with the surrounding tree tops, and admired the magnificent panorama of the city to the south of the Firth of Forth to the north. There were other days when the tea break would be in front of a roaring fire in the main hall, and there were unique rewards, such as the occasion when a visitor slapped his hand on a completely re-built stone wall and remarked, "They don't build walls like that nowadays!"<sup>584</sup>

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## FAWSIDE

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FIGURE 66 FAWSIDE CASTLE<sup>585</sup>

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<sup>582</sup> Gifford et al, **Edinburgh**, 549

<sup>583</sup> *ibid*

<sup>584</sup> *ibid*

<sup>585</sup> Author

The motto of the Fawside family who built the castle was most apposite: “Forth and fear nocht”. To my mind that was the right way to start the restoration!<sup>586</sup>

Fawside is a medium sized tower of the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in Midlothian, near Edinburgh. It was bought in 1976 from a farmer by Tom and Claire Craig. The farmer had wanted to demolish the building for safety reasons but Nigel Tranter got involved and managed to reverse the demolition decision; the farmer eventually sold it for the price of two acres of land. Although the owner has been classified as a ‘dreamer’, he had almost completed the building before it was repossessed by the bank; only a small amount of luck or determination - or both - separated him from Helen Bailey, who was threatened with foreclosure, but managed to source a loan at the last minute. Tom Craig was an engineer, with an interest in restoration per se:

Why did my wife and I want to restore a tower house? Well, I am a passionately keen engineer, involved in designing and manufacturing a wide range of mechanical equipment.....I find it offensive to come across bits of machinery that are not working, so I also restore clocks, cars, organs and anything that could work, if it is not in working order...<sup>587</sup>

Tom Craig’s tone is pragmatic throughout his account, despite the scale of the project and the difficulties he faced: “In concluding, I would remark that, in reality, considering the scale of the restoration, we had very few problems. We progressed slowly, over a long period, with the result that few mistakes were made. The restoration was a team effort, with each member and craft dovetailing to produce a simple restoration of real quality.”<sup>588</sup> The team included Ian Parsons as the first architect, who drew up the plans while still a student and carried on with the job once he qualified. The project was completed by Ben Tindall.

Ironically, despite his positive outlook and despite receiving a grant from the HBC, in the end Tom Craig was bankrupted by the rebuilding just before it was finished. It appears that he did not see this coming: “At one time one of the [bank] managers said to me, “Mr Craig, I don’t know how you sleep at night.” It was quite obvious that he wasn’t, but I was.”<sup>589</sup>

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## KINKELL

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Bright and early next morning we arrived at Kinkell, unlocked our tool shed and began work, innocents abroad in the building trade. We parked the wheelbarrow directly under one of the windows of the Great Hall, took our pick and shovel upstairs and started loosening the pile of plaster and rubbish on the floor.<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> Tom Craig ‘Fawside Castle – for owner occupation’ in Clow (ed) **Restoring Scotland’s Castles**, 130

<sup>587</sup> Tom Craig, 123

<sup>588</sup> Ibid, 142

<sup>589</sup> Ibid, 129

<sup>590</sup> Laing, 94

FIGURE 67 KINKELL CASTLE<sup>591</sup>

Kinkell is a sixteenth century tower in Inverness-shire which had been expanded in the eighteenth century and was ruinous and in danger of collapse when Gerald Laing and his wife purchased it from a farmer in 1964. Laing's full length book tells the story of the reconstruction of a Scottish castle (the subtitle of his book), but with many discursive asides about art, history, politics and social issues. Laing's restoration of Kinkell was a dream fulfillment, as described by a journalist:

As a solitary and alienated child growing up in the unlovely environs of post-war industrial Newcastle, Gerald Laing found the perfect antidote to his loneliness lay in the fantasy world he created by literally disappearing into the past. Peddling his bicycle deep into the so-called Debatable Lands along the Anglo-Scottish border, he found a landscape littered with picturesque peel towers and the remains of ancient castles. The ruins had an almost hypnotic hold over him, so much so that he was determined to possess a castle of his own and, at the age of 14, even went so far as to enquire the price of the peel tower at Corbridge. He could see exactly how the ruined tower could be restored. It was a vision he was to nurture for 20 years.<sup>592</sup>

Despite the gung-ho start described in the first quote above, Laing's approach to Kinkell was thoughtful, intellectual, artistic and moral. Intellectually, "The point of rebuilding Kinkell Castle was to savour the facts of sixteenth century architecture, and by doing so to understand more of the past and its similarities, rather than its differences from the present."<sup>593</sup> Artistically, "the castle itself was essentially a giant sculpture and I approached it as such."<sup>594</sup> Morally, although many owners put much effort into sourcing 'authentic' materials, Laing took a SPAB-like position (although he never mentions the organisation or its ideology), against the acquisition of fittings which were already old, or made to appear old:

What you think you'll get and what you actually end up with are two entirely different things. I found that we were halfway through building a new castle. Morally we could do nothing else. I had already

<sup>591</sup> <http://www.usscots.com/article/detail/Kinkell-Castle/> accessed January 2011

<sup>592</sup> 'Kinkell Castle' (no byline) **Scots Magazine** July 29<sup>th</sup> 2008, full text available at <http://www.usscots.com/article/detail/Kinkell-Castle/> accessed September 2010

<sup>593</sup> Laing, 124

<sup>594</sup> Laing, 172

decided that the only way to repair and replace parts of the structure was to use similar materials in a workmanlike way. To use old beams, or, worse, to disfigure and stain them artificially would be a hypocrisy based on romanticism. It would be an affectation even to trim them with an adze. P. 141

Despite his desire to be 'honest' and to work with the building sympathetically, Laing reported using cement and concrete liberally in his rebuilding, which would be viewed as conservation vandalism in the twenty-first century. He did, however, take a seriously aesthetic view of the interior design. When talking of internal plastering: "I experimented with various alternatives; first leaving the large stones in the wall uncovered and following the outer edges of the long and short corner stones around the various openings - doorways, windows, gun loops and arrow slits. This succeeded in making the room look like the Medieval Bar of a Chicago hotel and was a total failure."<sup>595</sup> The photograph, below, of the Great Hall at Castle Fraser being prepared for a corporate event involving American visitors shows the kind of plastering effect to which he refers.



FIGURE 68 CASTLE FRASER<sup>596</sup>

In the preface to the second edition, Laing explained why he decided to pull down an eighteenth century wing: "I appreciate fully the reason why the extension was added in the eighteenth century. I certainly could use the extra space and convenience which it provided. But I do not regret having demolished it; I do not regret the desire for the pure and original architectural expression which inspired the reconstruction of this castle, for that, I believe, is the element which excites the interest of so many people." The Murdochs also took down an extension at Methven, although the reason there seemed to be pragmatic rather than aesthetic, and at Cramond the Jamiesons added an extension later, as did the owner of Couston Castle when it was restored. Although in the twenty-first century it is exceedingly difficult to get planning permission for either demolitions or additions, in the 1960s – 80s a number of castle restorers were able to make significant changes to their buildings and also to take a degree of control over the work which would be unlikely to be permitted now in a Grade A Listed building. Laing justified his tight personal control in terms of the difficulty of visualizing the future:

This is a problem architects have to face the whole time; once the plan is delineated they are committed to its original form by cost. They cannot easily alter course whatever magic island or intriguing inlet reveals itself on the voyage. I had made many changes of plan during the rebuilding

<sup>595</sup> Ibid, 149

<sup>596</sup> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/11742429@N08/1395666799/in/set-72157602044348724/> accessed March 2011

of Kinkell which, even though some were major ones, were achieved simply and comparatively inexpensively, largely because I was using direct labour and had total control myself. If I had used a contractor, not only would the basic costs have been trebled before we began, but also any alteration of the original plan would have been difficult to implement and financially prohibitive.<sup>597</sup>

Laing's restoration from a roofless ruin to a furnished home took, astonishingly, less than one year. The book was an inspiration for Sir David Steel, restorer of Aikwood, whose wife gave him a copy, knowing that he was interested in restoring a castle or tower.<sup>598</sup> Tom Clarke, owner of Kilmartin and Lochhouse, also credited Kinkell and Laing's 'inspirational book' for his interest in restoring ruins.<sup>599</sup>

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## MAINS

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When I was eight I crawled through a small hole in the walls of the ruins of Mearns Castle, Glasgow, and from that moment I began to dream that one day I would have a castle of my own!<sup>600</sup>



FIGURE 69 MAINS CASTLE<sup>601</sup>

Mains Castle, near East Kilbride, is a fifteenth century tower, which was bought in a ruinous condition from a local farmer in 1976 for £150 by Mike Rowan, an entertainer by profession (the kilted stilt performer Big Rory), and a DIY restorer on a tight budget. It seemed that until he approached the farmer, no one had been interested in the castle:

Mike, a strange mixture of performer, designer, and inventor, enjoys showing visitors a cutting from a newspaper date 1952 which describes the crumbling nature of the castle, and predicts: "It is likely

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<sup>597</sup> Laing, 166 - 7

<sup>598</sup> Personal communication December 2010

<sup>599</sup> Tom Clarke 'A Castle Owner's Privilege' [http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/rec-id-36-cat\\_id-1-highlight-2-words.htm](http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/rec-id-36-cat_id-1-highlight-2-words.htm) accessed December 2010

<sup>600</sup> Ibid, 145

<sup>601</sup> <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/4608021> accessed January 2011

to fall away completely. Yet the fabric is still perfectly good, and would well repay renovation into a very manageable present-day homestead by some person of good taste and discrimination."<sup>602</sup>

The story of Mike Rowan's restoration of Mains Castle was broadcast as a television programme<sup>603</sup> which doubtless encouraged others to fantasize about doing the same. His account is one of adventure, dream fulfillment, financial difficulties and physical hardship.

While we were restoring the castle, we lived in a beautiful Edwardian caravan, with cut-glass windows. Our friends thought it was dead romantic, but it was a freezingly cold existence. After two extremely snowy winters, it was a blessing, but only a blessing in disguise, to move into an equally cold tower house!<sup>604</sup>

The military aspects of restorers' castles feature in many accounts, representing a fascination with defensiveness. An entire page of Mike Rowan's account is given over to the defensive properties of the tower, with a discussion of gunloops, bows and arrows and sword-sharpening marks, most of which seem to be the product of wishful thinking rather than any considered historical research. He was determined "to restore the castle without compromise, using traditional materials and finishes, wherever possible."<sup>605</sup> This initially included bare stone walls, which he saw as being particularly 'Scots' (see the Ranald MacInnes quote on the attraction of rubble in chapter four *What will the neighbours think*). "However, I changed my mind and plastered the bedroom, leaving the window surrounds with an exposed four inch margin of stone. It is a real treat to sit in the embrasure and I must admit that the rooms are so much better for being plastered."<sup>606</sup> As, indeed, they probably were originally, in their truly authentic state.

Twenty-two years after buying and restoring Mains Castle, Mike Rowan sold it in 1998, having used the Great hall for corporate entertaining events involving bagpipes, venison cooked on a peat fire and whisky, in order to fund the upkeep<sup>607</sup>. The woman who bought the property from him planned to use it a restaurant and tourist attraction, but was unable to do so due to planning regulations and had to sell up again in 2001.<sup>608</sup>

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## METHVEN

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Methven castle was a large building and our old manse had space enough to meet our needs. Downsizing should have been our aim. But logical thinking and planning can suffocate enterprise and opportunity.<sup>609</sup>

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<sup>602</sup> Conroy, Harry 'The Time Travellers' **The Glasgow Herald** 16 June 1994

<sup>603</sup> Michael C. Davis **Scots Baronial**, 56

<sup>604</sup> Mike Rowan 'Mains Castle' in Clow, 148

<sup>605</sup> Ibid, 152

<sup>606</sup> Ibid, 156

<sup>607</sup> Harry Conroy 'The Time Travellers' **The Glasgow Herald** 16 June 1994

<sup>608</sup> Frank Hurley 'Queen of the castle hangs up for the for sale sign' **The Scotsman** 15 March 2001

<sup>609</sup> Ken Murdoch, **Methven Castle**, 4

FIGURE 70 METHVEN CASTLE<sup>610</sup>

Methven is a large seventeenth century castellated villa which was derelict and deteriorating when the architect Ken Murdoch and his wife Anna purchased it for restoration from a farmer in 1983. The west wing had been demolished in 1953 and in 1984 the Murdochs demolished the east wing before commencing restoration work. This was a DIY project which Ken Murdoch described in a self-published book, beautifully illustrated with his own water colour sketches. One of his main themes is cocking a snook at authority (see chapter four, ‘battles with the authorities’), and another is the fun and adventure which he and his family had during the restoration, both of which are evident in this quote:

The bank manager asked if the building was insured – we had not. He asked how much the restoration was to cost – we had no idea.....My accountant asked if a cost plan was available – we did not have a plan nor did we want one. My solicitor advised me to have a feasibility study prepared to show a time scale and cash flow. We did not see the need for such a document. Historic Scotland did not like DIY restoration projects. Without this approach the cost could not be met. My family saw the project as good fun – and it was.<sup>611</sup>

Ken Murdoch’s book was, however, written twenty-five years after the event. Temporal distance from difficult events is a well-established factor in providing a rose-tinted view, which may be the case here: “Looking back we do not remember having doubts about our aim to return Methven Castle to a family house. If there was apprehension, excitement was dominant!”<sup>612</sup> Murdoch’s very first sighting of Methven is recalled in this passage:

On a wet September evening in 1952 I had the misfortune to part company with my motor cycle on road bends. Now I had time to look at the castle silhouetted against a stormy sky..... Pigeons flew in and out of upper windows. Their flapping wings told me I was an intruder. It was not possible to see into the dark interior, but from the outside this building was fascinating. The tree growing

<sup>610</sup> <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/74165> accessed January 2011

<sup>611</sup> Ken Murdoch **Methven Castle**, 11

<sup>612</sup> Ibid, 36



from the wallhead was a measure of years of neglect. How long had it stood empty? Who owned this castle? Why had the building been neglected?<sup>613</sup>

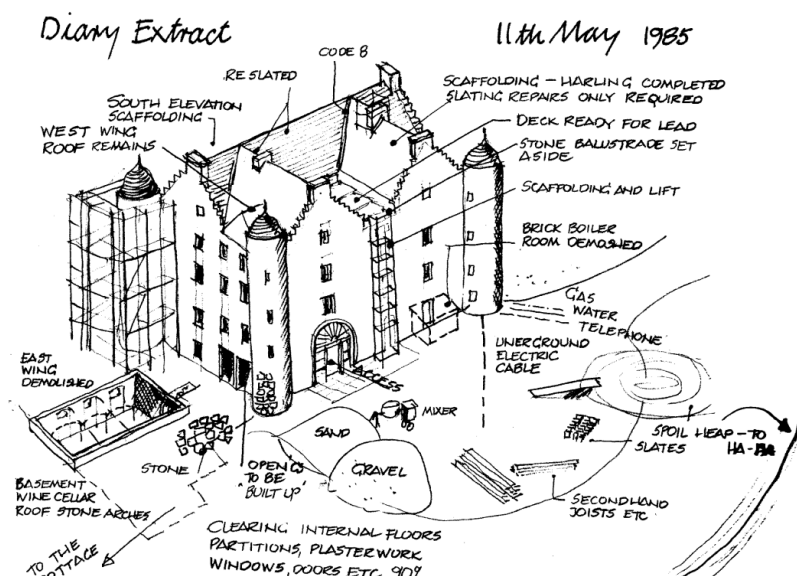


FIGURE 71 METHVEN CASTLE RESTORATION<sup>614</sup>

Thirty-two years later, Ken and Anna Murdoch purchased Methven in order to restore it - but with some reservations: "To be realistic, to turn around and purchase a castle in a ruinous condition was none other than a romantic notion."<sup>615</sup> They and their family started the restoration by holidaying in their 'Kamper' van, which they parked against the west wall of the castle and all worked together 'in clouds of dust and bonfire smoke' in a spirit of adventure into the unknown. "We had no answers to questions – how long will the restoration take; how much will the work cost and where will the funds come from; how much of the work will be carried out by ourselves?" Eventually, over a period of five years, they managed to effect a transformation of the derelict building. One of Ken Murdoch's sketches, above, shows the progress of the building work in 1985.

As an architect, Ken Murdoch was trained to understand building design, as was his architectural student son, who helped with the demolition and rebuilding. In the introduction to his book, Murdoch speculated as to whether his restoration of Methven was in some way linked to his childhood, or his early experiences as an architect. It is never possible to pinpoint with certainty which previous experiences have influenced our current behaviour, but everything we do is consequent upon what we have done before. Murdoch asked explicitly, "Was the decision to purchase Methven linked to childhood?"; the owners of Mains and Rusco clearly believed it to be the case, from the quotes which begin their case studies.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid, 3

<sup>614</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid, 4



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## RUSCO

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FIGURE 72 RUSCO TOWER<sup>616</sup>

“Like many wee boys. I had been fascinated by castles, but unlike some, I had never grown out of this fascination and by my mid-twenties I was day-dreaming about restoring one when I retired”<sup>617</sup>

Rusco Tower is a small fifteenth century tower which had been ruinous before Graham Carson, a businessman, and his wife, Buffy, bought it from the Gilbey-Vaux family in 1972. Graham Carson persuaded them to sell by making the risky but attractive offer of giving back the building for nothing if he had not completed the restoration by a specified date. The Carsons spent three years on the planning applications and carried out the restoration over a period of four years – long before their retirement – although the work had to be stopped twice for lack of money.

Graham Carson’s physical hardship story is quite comic:

The cows had been using the building as a house of ease for I don’t know how long, and the floor was eighteen inches deep in rich manure. So my first job was to start clearing it. I hired an enormous great pump and it worked manfully for fully an hour and a half. I was standing up to my knees in rotting manure. Suddenly there was the most almighty bang, followed by a hissing noise. I rushed outside. Oh dear! There was what was left of the large pump, with its contents scattered everywhere! At that point I decided I needed an architect.<sup>618</sup>

Graham Carson did find an architect (Bill Jack), although he acted as his own clerk of works, organizing and supervising the workforce. He took a detailed interest in the building work and a pride in the sourcing of materials – including second-hand stone from the platform of Leuchars railway junction and seasoned yellow pine from a demolished church organ in Edinburgh. Like the Murdoch family at Methven, the Carsons all pitched in for some heavy work:

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<sup>616</sup> Author

<sup>617</sup> Graham Carson ‘Rusco Tower’ in Clow (ed), 161

<sup>618</sup> Ibid, 165

The only job at which the whole Carson family soiled their hands was that of de-slating a roof – and dirty work it really was! ... The heaviest was about three quarters of a hundredweight and they had to be handed down carefully, from person to person from off the roof, using two ladders.

Graham Carson discovered that Rusco originally stood on land owned by John Accarson, so he felt that he was bringing back the Carson name to the tower. He also discovered that a baronetcy came with the tower, and subsequently had the baronial arms moulded in plaster above the Great Hall fireplace. As the owner of a kilt-making business, he always wore the kilt and doubtless found that a combination of the baronetcy and the castle made a nice lairdly image. In 2006, the Carsons passed the ownership of Rusco Tower to their son and moved to a more convenient house nearby.

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### AIKWOOD

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We were visited by Gordon Lockie, whom we had commissioned to take photographs of the 'before' and 'during' stages of the restoration. He brought two boxes of black and white photos and as we leafed through them in the comfort of the Great Hall, we turned to one another and said, 'we must have been mad.' It was certainly what a lot of people thought when we announced our intention.<sup>619</sup>



FIGURE 73 AIKWOOD TOWER<sup>620</sup>

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<sup>619</sup> No byline 'Border Stronghold' **Scottish Homes** September 1996

<sup>620</sup> <http://www.scottish-places.info/features/featurefirst4920.html>

Aikwood Tower, in the Borders, is a small sixteenth century tower, with an eighteenth century farmhouse adjoining at the back, which was bought by Lord and Lady Steel from the Duke of Buccleuch in 1989. Unlike Gerald Laing, who demolished the later extension at Kinkell, the Steels took a pragmatic approach and kept the extension for use as office and exhibition space. Judy Steel, author of a number of books and plays and theatre director, wrote first person accounts of the restoration of Aikwood in a glossy magazine and in *The Times*, and David Steel was interviewed by *Broughton's Magazine* (published by Bentley Cars):

"We lived two miles up the road and visited the Tower on a regular basis. It was full of pigeons and rats but had caught our imagination. The Tower was owned by the Duke of Buccleuch. He wanted to see Aikwood brought back into use and knew that we dreamed of doing so. The building was in a critical state of dilapidation with the main chimney breast looking unstable, and the roof, top floor and windows in complete need of replacement."<sup>621</sup>

Judy Steel also mentions the 'dream' of restoring Aikwood: "The project was made possible by .....the enthusiasm of the tower's owner, the Duke of Buccleuch, who not only wanted to see it restored, but knowing of our long-term dream of doing so, wanted us to be the people to carry it out." The Steels were fortunate and unusual in having a kind of aristocratic 'sponsor' in their tower's previous owner, one who would encourage fulfillment of their dream. They were also fortunate in having had a legal settlement which mostly paid for the work, although they also received financial support from Historic Scotland, which she describes as 'helpful'. Madness is another theme which appears in her narratives, both in the initial quote and the one which follows:

For a year – and this was a remarkably short time – there was nothing but paperwork, plans and grant applications. In the course of that year, we went round looking at other people's restorations. This made us conscious of two things: one was that there is a sort of freemasonry amongst those who embark on the restoration of Scottish towers, which manifests itself in the sharing of experiences. The phrase 'don't make the mistake we did about.....cropped up frequently.'<sup>622</sup>

In the quote above, madness is mentioned again, and also the community or 'freemasonry' of other owner restorers, who could be helpful and supportive to each other. Robert Clow also mentioned this resource: "Various individuals wrote or phoned, offering to exchange invaluable information sources of materials, techniques, or simply to share experiences. So it was that we met Mike Rowan .....and Graham and Buffy Carson of Rusco."<sup>623</sup> In the time before the Internet made information readily accessible, first hand offers of practical information from other restorers must have seemed a godsend. The Steels and their family did some of the hands-on work: "Our two sons, and our future daughter in law, also worked on

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<sup>621</sup> Broughtons Magazine Online Issue 3 accessed March 2010 (but probably written before 2004)  
Interview with Lord David Steel:

<http://www.broughtonsmagazine.co.uk/issue3/content/aikwood.html>

<sup>622</sup> Judy Steel 'A Liberal Conversion of History' *The Times* November 7, 1992

<sup>623</sup> Clow in Clow, 99

the tower from the beginning, doing much of the unskilled work and also most of the interior painting.”<sup>624</sup> Although the Steels had a project architect, they did not take on a contractor to manage the job, despite having planned to do so. For reasons of cost, they employed separate local craftsmen for each part as necessary:

After the plans were drawn and went out to tender, we were staggered at the difference between the estimated costs and the tenders from main contractors. At a meeting of the architects to consider them, David said: "Why don't we contract separate trades and oversee it ourselves?" Somebody else from the practice warned that it would probably take longer but be cheaper "and you'd probably get a better job". Knowing that the "we" meant me, as I am home all week and David is in London, I protested lack of time and knowledge, but eventually agreed. It was the best decision we could have made.<sup>625</sup>

Judy Steel found her pessimistic expectations of the process to be confounded: “what I expected to be a traumatic and stressful time was good-humoured, harmonious and positive.”<sup>626</sup> Hers is one of the few accounts of a restoration which emphasizes the positive aspects and the only one to do so exclusively, without any tales of mistakes, hardships or difficulties.

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### TILQUHILLIE

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FIGURE 74 TILQUHILLIE CASTLE<sup>627</sup>

I fell in love with Scotland's fortified architecture twenty-five years ago. What appealed to me the most was its austere functionalism, tempered with a rustic elegance. I am, by nature, a restorer of things. I had the good fortune or good sense to marry a person of a compatible disposition.<sup>628</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> Judy Steel 'A Liberal Conversion of History' **The Times** November 7, 1992

<sup>625</sup> *ibid*

<sup>626</sup> *ibid*

<sup>627</sup> Author

<sup>628</sup> Coyne in Clow, 67

Tilquhillie Castle in Aberdeenshire is a sixteenth century 'Z' tower which had been uninhabited since WW2 and was being used to house farm turkeys when it was bought in 1985 by Dr John Coyne, an American former diplomat, and his wife, Kay Hamlander, who is originally Norwegian, in order to restore the building to a family home. The purchase took several years of negotiation with the old owner. W.A. Brogden described the Coynes' restoration of Tilquhillie as 'soberly intellectual' and used a medical metaphor to make his point: "Tilquhillie was listened to in the manner of a good medical practitioner listening to a patient, and over time its health was regained."<sup>629</sup> The Coynes took a strict approach to the use of materials, determined to get every detail correct. "...stone slabs from Caithness, granite from demolished Aberdeenshire steadings and churches, reclaimed pavement stones from Aberdeen, timber from Speyside distilleries, Glasgow churches and the forests of France. I even bought three different eight foot lintels to replace the one missing from the Great Hall's fireplace, trying to get just the right colour and surface."<sup>630</sup>

John Coyne told the familiar stories of DIY difficulties: "The glazing of the gunloops was one of the worst jobs in the castle, therefore it fell to me. ... Many times I had to wedge myself into the opening, arms outstretched – not a job for anyone who is claustrophobic."<sup>631</sup> He also helped the workmen who labored on the restoration, sometimes on equally difficult jobs:

The morning I picked to install the rhone the bees had decided to swarm. It was obvious that it would be a two man job. The blacksmith informed me that he was afraid of only two things in life, heights and bees. Nevertheless, he volunteered. I managed to borrow a beekeeper's smoker to calm the bees. Up we went. For two hours we swayed back and forth in the little bucket of the lift, in a cloud of bees and smoke.<sup>632</sup>

In the same volume as John Coyne's account of the restoration of Tilquhillie, is a parallel account by his Dutch architect, France Smoor, who owns a '1641 fortalice' near Dundee, which he repaired extensively in the 1960s. His ideas about conservation do not coincide exactly with John Coyne's quest for absolute authenticity, in his promotion of subjectivity :

My philosophy coincides with that of Historic Scotland, in that one should aim in restorations to consolidate the entire heritage and history of the building. I differ from them, however, in my belief that one should conserve or repair only what is worth preserving. Decay is also an aspect of history that one should accept and is a valid reason to remove what has no merit. This, of course, introduces subjective evaluation! Our forebears never had any inhibitions about adding that 'something contemporary' which was sometimes eclectic, sometimes historicizing, and sometimes radically

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<sup>629</sup> Brogden foreword in Clow, viii

<sup>630</sup> Coyne in Clow, 69

<sup>631</sup> Ibid, 76

<sup>632</sup> Ibid, 77

new, depending on the builder's taste, but is almost always recognisable to the practiced eye as being a product of its own period, without the need to date everything.<sup>633</sup>

The two restorers, owner and architect, seemed to have worked well together, despite their ideological differences, and trade glowing compliments about each other in their accounts of the restoration in Clow's book.

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## BORTHWICK

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FIGURE 75 BORTHWICK CASTLE<sup>634</sup>

I came, I saw and was conquered. Totally captivated by a building, but a very special one. A massive, magnificent castle standing like a sentinel over the lovely hamlet of Borthwick.<sup>635</sup>

Borthwick is an enormous U-plan castle in Midlothian near Edinburgh, built in 1430. It was derelict rather than ruinous when Helen Bailey took it over in 1972 on a 99 year lease from the Earl of Borthwick (she eventually managed to buy it several years later, after strenuous negotiations), after approaching him and persuading him to let her have the castle. She invoked a kind of mystical predestination: "As I walked around its perimeter walls and absorbed the unspoilt countryside in which it is set, it seemed to me that my presence at this spot and at this time was the fulfillment of a date with destiny. This feeling, already strong, was enhanced when my ears picked up a quiet, insistent, plaintive cry for help, intermingled with the murmuring of the gently flowing burn."<sup>636</sup> Her story is atypical in many ways – the castle is huge, the end use was as a hotel, the restorer was a single woman whose business partner turned out to be incompetent and she did not own the castle for some considerable time due to a poorly managed agreement with the old owners. The risks which she took were gargantuan. A bookseller might place the book in the 'inspirational literature' section, as it describes the overcoming of great odds through a series

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<sup>633</sup> Smoor in Clow, 55

<sup>634</sup> Author

<sup>635</sup> Bailey, 7

<sup>636</sup> Bailey, 7

of risky adventures to a satisfyingly achieved end. In some ways, however, the story of Borthwick Castle's restoration does fit the 'norm' – it was begun in 1973, at the start of the heritage movement; Helen Bailey was a 'new' owner who came from a very ordinary background (her father had been a cabinetmaker and she attended the local state secondary school in Edinburgh<sup>637</sup>); and she carried out the restoration using her earnings. Although she worked as a business consultant and had had a career in television, she was not wealthy. Her lack of sufficient income led to serious financial difficulties, whereby she only narrowly avoided foreclosure.

Helen Bailey described her restoration of Borthwick Castle in her book *My Love Affair with Borthwick Castle*. Hers is not quite a misery memoir, but it is about triumph over adversity. The story is written as a drama, with ghosts, evildoers, celebrity visitors, comedy and, finally, romance, when a paying guest at the castle (successfully) proposed marriage to her. The tone is very different from the more pragmatically descriptive style which characterizes many of the other first person narratives, exemplified by her description of the initial, predestined 'love at first sight' decision to take on the restoration of Borthwick Castle (above). This rather fey account is in stark contrast to the straight words of Gerry Loadsman, who bought Borthwick, already restored, from Helen Bailey in 1984: 'I never had any intention of living in the castle. I bought it to own it, like buying a Bentley, a lovely car.'<sup>638</sup> Yet it seems clear that both were motivated to buy by the romantic appeal of owning a Scottish castle. Helen Bailey's initial, almost other-worldly approach to Borthwick was soon tempered, or even reversed, by the scale of practical and financial difficulties which she faced:

I did not anticipate the sleepless nights, the heartaches and the agonies I had to endure while the castle was under siege from irate creditors during my struggles to escape bankruptcy, nor how deeply I was to be hurt by the open, sometimes vicious hostility of local public opinion. Not in a million years would I have believed that I would have to suffer the slings and arrows of Local Government officials who, it seemed, genuinely believed that the best way to protect the castle was to preside over its decline.<sup>639</sup>

In Helen Bailey's restoration no financial support was received or asked for, despite her narrow escape from bankruptcy: "One thing I will not do is to apply for government aid or grants. I will either succeed on my own as a commercial enterprise, or fail in the attempt. I refuse utterly to go around with a begging bowl, nor do I have the soup kitchen mentality that has done so much damage to this country."<sup>640</sup> This extreme ideological stance caused her great financial worry. Additionally, although she did not take on the labour of the restoration work herself, like other castle owners, Helen Bailey suffered physical privations while it was going on:

For the next three weeks we lived in the Gate House in very cramped conditions. But at least we were warm and could cook our food on a small calor gas stove. The luxury of having a bath, however, came to an abrupt end when a neighbour, who shared the same spring well, cut off our supply. This was the first sign of the hostility that we were to encounter in the hamlet of

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<sup>637</sup> John Gibson 'Obituary: Helen Wilson' **The Scotsman** 15 January 2007

<sup>638</sup> Quoted by Mike Wilson in 'A fortress fit for a Scottish queen' **The Sunday Times** February 3 2008

<sup>639</sup> Bailey, 10

<sup>640</sup> Ibid, 40



Borthwick.... My pioneering spirit was severely strained particularly when I fell sick with a stomach complaint. Because the lavatory was out of use, there was nothing for it but to find a secluded bush behind the Gate House.<sup>641</sup>

Among many serious difficulties and setbacks, she claimed that the most unpleasant of her recollections was the grief resulting from the hostility of neighbours. Several Scottish restorers - the Jamiesons at Cramond, Peter Hewkin at Craigownie, the Cowans at Glenapp and the Morrisises at Balgonie – were the target of local vandals. Being a castle owner runs the risk of inciting aggression from neighbours, or the ‘politics of envy’ as Nicholas Fairbairn claimed.

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### GLENAPP

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On rounding the last corner, past a pair of magnificent monkey-puzzle trees we had our first glimpse of our future home, Glenapp Castle. It was a completely breathtaking sight – a forgotten place - a sleeping beauty, like the castle in the fairytale that slept for a hundred years. The lawns were meadows and the paths merely suggested themselves by a dip in the ground. The windows were black and peeling and many were rotted completely away like missing teeth. The huge oak doors hung loose and creaking on their hinges. That day we stayed only a little while, but we were completely hooked. Nothing else would ever come close to this.<sup>642</sup>



FIGURE 76 GLENAPP CASTLE DURING THE RESTORATION<sup>643</sup>

Glenapp Castle is a huge David Bryce Victorian baronial mansion in Galloway, which had become derelict after a series of owners had neglected its upkeep in the second half of the twentieth century. It was bought by a young couple, Fay and Graham Cowan, in 1993. Fay was working as a hotel manager, and Graham was a country vet. In the autumn of that year they were taken to see

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<sup>641</sup> Bailey, 24

<sup>642</sup> *ibid*

<sup>643</sup> <http://www.glenappcastle.com/today.htm> accessed March 2011



Glenapp Castle by Fay's parents who run a chain of hotels and had seen the property advertised for sale. Like Helen Bailey, the Cowans intended to restore the castle for use as an upmarket hotel. Negotiations with the owners of the castle were protracted and it took over a year before a leasehold was agreed and a further five years before they were able to buy it.

Graham Cowan's account of the first viewing of the castle is posted on the website of Glenapp Castle, which is now run by the Cowans as an extremely expensive luxury hotel. His narrative has the same romantic, 'love at first sight' tone as Helen Bailey's account of Borthwick, and as the fictional version of his account in Tina Rosenberg's book. The young couple, like Helen Bailey and numerous other restorers, faced a huge scale project and suffered privations (although not as serious as many) while they worked on the rebuilding:

Our first year was spent 'camping' in the master bedroom, along with four electric fires, a four poster bed with its own chandelier, and a geriatric Springer Spaniel. We were often asked if we weren't nervous of living alone in a vast deserted castle, but to us, Glenapp has never felt like anything other than a much loved home, despite its enormous size and we were just delighted to be here. Much of this first year was spent trying to get our plans passed by the local planning department, and making a start on the thirty acres of neglected garden and woodland. It took days for us even to get into the walled garden and the greenhouses alone were to take three months of joiner work and hundreds of panes of glass to restore. In the early days we had to switch four different hot water tanks on, to get scalding hot water in our bathroom. If we switched one off the water was instantly stone cold. Our bathroom was bigger than some of our friend's flats, and boasted a row of nine fitted wardrobes as well as for some reason, a bidet on wheels.

They moved into the castle just in time to make their rescue more effective:

Fay and I moved into the castle in June 1994, ten days before the lease actually came into effect, mainly to try and prevent the ever increasing flow of unwanted visitors intent on removing the fixtures and fittings from the by now caretakerless castle. Just in time, as it turned out, because that very weekend there had been some kind of party in the gardens and fires had been lit, the lawns were strewn with beer bottles and cans, the castle had been broken into and worst of all the beautiful sundial in the terraced garden had been smashed to pieces.

Gwydir Castle in Wales had also been desecrated while being used as a party venue, in this case for mock mediaeval drunken gatherings and Judy Corbett and her husband had to rescue the building from their effects: "The downstairs looked like the inside of a very sleazy nightclub, which indeed it was before we bought the castle. There was even a 'Ladies' and 'Gents', complete with malodorous urinals and an Expelair, which had been punched through the leaded lights of an original sixteenth century window."<sup>644</sup> They, too, were a young couple planning to make a hotel out of a very large derelict building.

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<sup>644</sup> Corbett, 7

Graham Cowan finished his narrative of the restoration on what is almost an understatement, considering the huge scale of what had been achieved over five years: "We couldn't be more proud of what we have created at Glenapp. The effort has been enormous but very worthwhile."

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## ROSSEND

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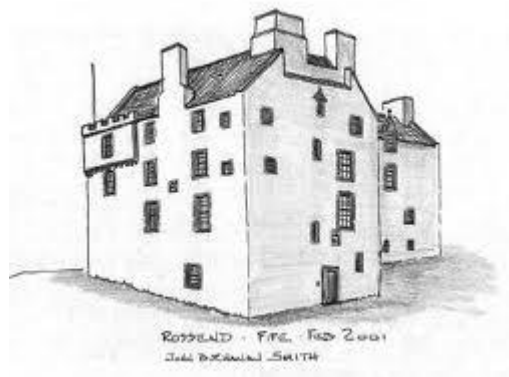


FIGURE 77 ROSSEND CASTLE<sup>645</sup>

Mr Harry Gourlay's advice was to "erect a palisade around the Castle high enough and strong enough to keep children out and also to prevent people from seeing the monster, remove all mechanical implements which are sustaining the building at the moment and allow it to fall into a state of utter decay."<sup>646</sup>

Rossend is a medium to large sized sixteenth century turreted house, with seventeenth century additions. It was purchased by the Hurd Rolland firm of architects in 1975 to restore as offices for the practice. Its story represents the biggest battle against the authorities of any restoration project, told from the point of view of a professional architect. The story of the fight to save Rossend Castle in Fife from demolition in the early 1970s – just as the tide was turning against the destruction of historical buildings – is full of drama and, from a twenty-first century perspective, shocking. John Gifford described it as "the material for a conservationist's fairy story (despised frog kissed by beautiful maiden and transformed into a handsome if heavy-featured prince)."<sup>647</sup> Rossend's story illustrates the depths of feeling *against* historic buildings which existed in Scotland in the postwar years, exemplified by the quote from Harry Gourlay, above.

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<sup>645</sup> Drawing of Rossend by John Buchanan-Smith at <http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/JS-castle-sketches.php?page=2&order=1> accessed January 2011

<sup>646</sup> All of the quotes in this section, unless noted otherwise, are from the same source, a reprint from a booklet published by the architects in November 1977 and written by L.A.L. Rolland, published online at: <http://www.brand-dd.com/burntisland/rossend2.html> accessed September 2010

<sup>647</sup> Gifford, *Fife*, 113

The narrative account of the restoration was written by L.A.L. Rolland, the project manager for the architects firm of Robert Hurd and Partners, which eventually managed to purchase the castle from the local council for £350 (sic) in order to restore it and turn it into offices for the practice, but only after the demolition crew had moved their equipment onto the site.

The voice of Mr Harry Gourlay, MP for Kirkcaldy Burghs was strong at this stage. He attacked the Secretary of State and said he would raise the matter in the Commons. He said "as far as I can see there is absolutely no argument for preserving this building. *It does not even look like a Castle and has no beauty at all in my eyes*". This is one of the saddest statements ever made against Rossend and illustrates a common trait in the Scots character. We should all take heed!.... Anyway, the Secretary of State refused permission to demolish in March 1972 and the heat was taken out of the case. (italics added)

It is interesting to note that the 'look' of the building was an important factor in influencing opinion against its retention. As has been noted in chapter one and in chapter four in the section on new castles, appearance is highly significant in shaping perceptions of whether or not a castle 'deserves' the appellation; the name itself is not always sufficient. Buittle Tower in Galloway had its turrets removed in the nineteenth century, when it was let out to a tenant farmer; they were considered too grand for the new use of the building.<sup>648</sup> Rolland's view that it 'illustrates a common trait in the Scots character' echoes the views of Moultrie Kelsall: "To Scotsmen-on-the-make the fact that a building was traditional in design, and of a respectable age, were twin reasons why it should be destroyed."<sup>649</sup> Another local politician was equally against saving the castle: "Dean of Guild Bolam, amazed to read of the historical interest said "I would like to know what comprises historical. I understand that Mary Queen of Scots stayed there one night - that's nothing to get hysterical about, never mind historical.""

The next three paragraphs are direct transcripts of Rolland's account of the restoration work, the first one giving his rationale for restoring Rossend and the next two describing the state of the building and the method of working at the restoration as a team effort. Rolland's account shows themes of challenge, triumph over adversity, rescue mission, an appeal to historical continuity and lengthy negotiations to buy:

Rossend, through its long contact with life in Scotland, is important. We are all products of our past. Geography and all our background of social history are without doubt more important to each one of us than an isolated building, but by maintaining buildings such as this Castle, we hold on to our roots and perhaps avoid a trap, imagining that we are more important than we are, of even thinking that the world started with our birthday.....

We started without much detail. This was going to be an inch by inch job, basically divided into two phases. The first task was to secure the building from further deterioration by stabilising the walls and making it wind and water tight. It was in a sorry state - open to the sky, the roof virtually gone and gaping holes where windows used to be. Intermediate floors had collapsed and serious

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<sup>648</sup> <http://theborderers.info/Buittle.html> accessed March 2011

<sup>649</sup> Moultrie R. Kelsall and Stuart Harris **A Future for the Past** (1961) Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 3

demolition efforts by children were "in progress". Stone fireplaces were vandalised and stones removed from the building. Most serious of all, the wallheads were now exposed to the weather and were beginning to decay. The structure was under grave threat.

The method for getting the work done was easily agreed. We had to control the expenditure month by month, and so we decided to employ our own men. In the office we all wanted to retain an interest in the work. After all, some of us might eventually work there, and we were the clients, architects and contractors. Ian Begg took on the role of client and consultant. I became partner in charge, Jimmy Shepherd, an associate, the job architect, with Bryan Hickman a student architect to assist him. One of our clerks of works, John Lewis, became organiser - general foreman and magician, conjuring up materials and plant at the drop of a hat! Our beginnings were small. Two labourers, one William Bell from the Castle area, started the task of clearing out the shell, which had become a home fit only for pigeons.

Also in the 1970s, Blackhall Manor in Paisley, which had been bequeathed to the town, was eventually so neglected, vandalized and dangerous that there were calls for it to be demolished. But Paisley Council took a different view. In 1978, "The council considered this option but the public outcry was such that the order was given to shore up the building and brick up the windows against further damage. In 1982 Alex Strachan acquired the property and immediately set about the gargantuan task of restoring it."<sup>650</sup> It may be that the very public rescue of Rossend had a second beneficial effect, in the saving of Blackhall Manor.

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## SUMMARY

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The motives and motifs listed in Table 19 are amply illustrated in the narratives. Romance is a theme of Fordell, Fawside, Borthwick and Glenapp, while heritage and continuity are represented by the 'heritage' restorers of Kisimul and Breachacha. Ken Murdoch of Methven emphasized the adventurous, fun elements of his project, and Graham Carson of Rusco and Mike Rowan of Mains were explicitly fulfilling boyhood dreams. Many of the restorers were intent on rescuing a decaying building from further collapse or the danger of demolition, but the most dramatic example is Rossend, where the building was saved at the eleventh hour. In terms of the motifs, these are apparent throughout the case studies. The extracts from the narratives presented in this chapter are selective; but so is the content of the restorers' narratives. When we construct a story we leave out sub plots which may reflect badly on us, or which we believe to be irrelevant. Robert Macneil's son, Ian Roderick Macneil, recognised this in his preface to the republication of his father's account of the restoration of Kisimul: "It is only part of the story because, like many another campaign memoir this one, too, downplays disappointments, costs, and sometimes, the contributions of others."<sup>651</sup> The downplaying of certain difficulties is doubtless also a feature of other castle restoration narratives, despite their emphasis on overcoming hardship. Some restorers, such as Ken Murdoch, contrast the mundane (e.g. clearing rubble, making tea on a

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<sup>650</sup> Leith Stuart 'Blackhall Manor' **SCA Newsletter** issue 3

<sup>651</sup> Macneil **Castle in the Sea**, Republication 1975, Preface, 2

camping stove) with the extraordinary (building a castle anew) in order to convey the exceptional as meaningful. Others, like Helen Bailey, rely on a continuing series of dramatic events for effect.

The psychologist Alfred Adler coined the term 'lifestyle' to describe a person's means of striving for superiority; a healthy lifestyle drives one forward to attain meaningful goals. In Adlerian terms the motivations for the restorations can be seen as a striving for superiority in a compensatory reaction to feelings of inferiority or a sense of inadequacy. Adler talked of the 'great upward drive' to describe the struggle for increased competence and superiority which propels people forward to overcome feelings of inadequacy. It is impossible to assess each individual castle restorer in these terms, of course, but as an explanatory framework for achievements it has an intuitive plausibility which makes it a useful hypothesis about what drove on so many individual restorers in the face of enormous difficulties. This would answer the question of what is the difference between those who buy a ready-to-live-in castle, as has become almost commonplace in the post WW2 period, and those who buy a ruin. The answer is striving and effort; throughout the restoration narratives are stories of epic effort - the goal is felt not to be worth achieving without the striving. In terms of dream fulfillment, the theme of boyhood longing for a castle features often in the narratives, along with the influence of early experiences of exploring castles.

Only one of the narratives, Gerald Laing's, has any literary pretensions; his writing is introspective, thoughtful and the prose has a carefully constructed quality which sets it apart from the stories of others. Beyond Scotland, two other narratives share Laing's ability to reflect upon the difficult universal questions that restoration can raise and ponder them with intelligent insight: Matthew Parris's *A Castle in Spain* and James Charles Roy's *The Fields of Athenry*. All three are also very enjoyable as page-turning stories, with plenty of pace and tension, and a nicely judged balance between action and reflection. The eminent psychologist, Jerome Bruner, in his extended essay *Making Stories*, considered the uses of narratives in society. "We more often tell stories to forewarn than to instruct. And because of this, stories are a culture's coin and currency....For it is the conventionalization of narrative that converts individual experience into collective coin which can be circulated, as it were, on a base wider than a merely interpersonal one."<sup>652</sup> The narratives of those who have told the story of their castle restoration have, in a small way, entered the cultural currency and become a part of the Scottish story. The selection of narratives which follows broadens the picture to take in a European context.

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## EUROPEAN RESTORATION NARRATIVES

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"Enfant, je rêvais de chevaux, de châteaux, d'oubliettes, et de tours. Devenu adulte, j'ai passé des nuits blanches à donner corps à ces rêves."<sup>653</sup> (As a child, I dreamed of horses, of castles, of dungeons and of towers. When I grew up, I spent sleepless nights fleshing out these dreams.)

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<sup>652</sup> Bruner, 15-16

<sup>653</sup> Michel Guyot *J'ai rêvé d'un château* (2007) Éditions Jc Lattès, 14

Several authors have described their own castle reconstruction projects in other parts of the UK and Europe – Judy Corbett in Wales, Matthew Parris in Spain, Nicholas Browne, Jeremy Irons and James Charles Roy in Ireland and Michel Guyot in France. The first four are English; James Charles Roy is American and Michel Guyot is French. All of these, apart from Jeremy Irons, have written full length books about their restoration projects. Their narratives have the same qualities of romance, adventure, dream fulfillment and hardship as their Scottish counterparts. Nicholas Browne, a young Englishman, bought an enormous nineteenth century baronial castle in County Limerick in Ireland in 1996, Castle Oliver, and wrote a short book about his experiences, which emphasized both the rewards and the drawbacks of the colossal nature of his rebuilding project:

People ask do I ever wake up in despair, or feel the task is hopeless. The answer is easy – never. I love every day here, and I love the work, even mending the potholes in the drive and cleaning windows. It's the responsibility that I find difficult. Unless you are able to afford a fulltime caretaker, one that has proven themselves trustworthy and capable – which I could not afford – the onus is on you. It means twenty-four hours a day, 365 days of the year, total financial and physical commitment.....<sup>654</sup>



FIGURE 78 CASTLE OLIVER<sup>655</sup>

Michel Guyot has also worked on a grand scale; he is a kind of castle restoration 'impresario', who has restored several enormous chateaux in France, starting with Saint-Fargeau in 1979. In 1997 he began an extraordinary castle building project<sup>656</sup>; Chateau de Guédelon is a copy of a large mediaeval castle which is being constructed over the course of 25 years using only original methods, tools and materials. The building site is open to tourists, tens of thousands of whom visit each year, along with 60,000 schoolchildren on organized trips, and fund the building work. In 2010 he helped to start a project similar to Château Guédelon in Arkansas, USA: "1994. Un projet fou me taraude depuis longtemps: construire à partir de rien un château fort du XIII siècle, un vrai, avec un comité scientifique qui cautionne le projet. Ce sera Guédelon . Pour cela, je visite

<sup>654</sup> Browne, 46 - 47

<sup>655</sup> <http://www.ballyhouracountry.com/destinations/8-ardpatrick/accomodations/5-castle-oliver> accessed March 2011

<sup>656</sup> [http://www.guedelon.fr/en/the-guedelon-adventure\\_01.html](http://www.guedelon.fr/en/the-guedelon-adventure_01.html) is the address for the website in English. Accessed October 2010

300 ruines oubliées de tous. Quatre m'émeuvent particulièrement, je les rachète pour les sauver."<sup>657</sup>

Judy Corbett's Welsh castle restoration is narrated as a romantic adventure, in a somewhat fey style, with numerous allusions to ghosts and supernatural happenings and a tendency to personify the building. ("I was so saddened that such a venerable old house had been brought to its knees in this way. I wanted to wrap my arms around it and comfort it as you would a small child."<sup>658</sup>) She, too, suffered physical hardships during the rebuilding: "We are living in the one wing which has some semblance of a roof, but even that is minimal. In the beginning we had no hot water, no heating and very little electricity. It felt like an endurance test which took a great deal of determination to cope with in the very cold, wet weather."<sup>659</sup>



FIGURE 79 GWYDIR CASTLE IN WALES<sup>660</sup>

Matthew Parris, an experienced professional writer of some standing, took a carefully considered approach to his story. He restored a large mock-fortified Renaissance house in Spain, *l'Avenc*, which he and his family bought in 1998, and difficulties also dogged his project: "Each of us had aged visibly in the six years since we had bought the property, and the strain of keeping the project on the road had played its part.....Costs kept mounting. Difficulties kept multiplying. Red tape grew ever more tangled. Deadlines kept being missed."<sup>661</sup> In Ireland, the American historian James Charles Roy struggled with the problems of working in an alien culture when restoring Moyode Castle:

"Familiarity breeds contempt" runs the old saw, and though my affection for most things Irish remains as strong as ever, the mundane reversals of fortune that plague any substantial building

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<sup>657</sup> Michel Guyot *J'ai rêvé d'un château* Éditions Jc Lattès, 2007, 24 (A crazy project had been gnawing at me for a long time: to build a thirteenth century castle from scratch, supported by a committee of scientists. This was to be Guédelon. For that project, I visited 300 forgotten ruins. Four of them particularly moved me; those I purchased, in order to save them.)

<sup>658</sup> Corbett, 24

<sup>659</sup> Corbett, 5

<sup>660</sup> <http://gothicbohemianstock.deviantart.com/art/Stock-Gwydir-Castle-15-97914331> accessed March 2011

<sup>661</sup> Parris, 99-100



project – and especially those of a Third World nature, as County Galway revealed itself to be – can strain the credulity level of any would-be zealot. Shards of Elizabethan prejudice infected my vision: delays, procrastination, financial sleight of hand, interminable tea breaks, the gush of brave talk unbacked by resolution, all caused me to think as a ‘foreigner’. Moyode became in many respects more of a burden than a respite.<sup>662</sup>

Also in Ireland, the English actor, Jeremy Irons, took on the romantic ruin of Kilcoe castle in County Cork as a rescue mission:

Kilcoe was a beautiful ruin, dangerous and romantic, part of every childhood in the surrounding townlands. I shall never forget, as a grown-up child, the first time I scaled to the very topmost rampart and, with butterflies in my stomach, looked out over the islands of Roaringwater Bay towards the flashing of the Fastnet. But as a builder I looked with sadness on how it had been ignored and vandalised over the centuries, how the carved window stones had been pushed out and robbed, and how one particular part was near to collapse.<sup>663</sup>

It appears from these narratives that the experience of restoring castles has many universal elements. All of the quotes above echo the sentiments already portrayed; there is very little throughout these European stories and reflections that would not be completely familiar to a Scottish castle restorer, although the size and scale of most of the projects is far grander than the majority of the Scottish ones. James Charles Roy found Ireland very trying, but his perspective is that of an American; if he had restored a castle in Scotland he might just as easily have found himself frustrated by ‘delays, procrastination, financial sleight of hand, interminable tea breaks and the gush of brave talk unbacked by resolution’. In Spain, Matthew Parris found that working within the country’s building regulations was difficult and time-consuming, just as many Scottish restorers experienced, as did Lady Hamlyn in France (see chapter two, *European Castles*). All of the six restorers quoted here had been seduced by the romantic aspect of their ruin and all had faced significant challenges – physical, financial and emotional – in bringing their projects to fruition. Matthew Parris’s attention to the imagined past of his Spanish castle and its temporal situation is unusual, however; nothing similar is found in any of the Scottish accounts:

Not for the first time I pictured in my mind’s eye the dead generations of Catalan *masovers*, generation upon generation for 800 years, men and women for whom l’Avenc had been home since the twelfth century; and the sixteenth century labourers who built the modern façade of the house, stone by stone, with only mules for transport and the arms, ropes and pulleys to lift. I pictured them as a silent army, ghostly and grey, rank upon rank from every succeeding century, massed around the house like a sea around an island.<sup>664</sup>

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<sup>662</sup> Roy, 2

<sup>663</sup> Jeremy Irons 'Let's Bring A Bit of Warmth To West Cork' **The Irish Times** 30 May 2001

<sup>664</sup> Parris, 218





FIGURE 80 L'AVENC IN SPAIN<sup>665</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

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The chapter has ended with a quote from one of the few passages in any narrative, Scottish or otherwise, that displays a real sensitivity to the past or the wider issues of historicity. Many of the narratives are lacking in inquiry into the wider issues concerning restoration. They read like adventure stories or charmed autobiographies, whose message is essentially: “Look what I just did!” In order to understand the underlying issues, it is necessary to take a step back from the close quarters and fine details of the individual case studies and look again at the wider picture which they paint. Dozens of eager would-be restorers were seduced by the romantic appeal of a hopeless ruin, then grappled with almost insurmountable obstacles in order to rebuild it. In the background are the farmers and old owners of the properties, torn between wanting to hang on to what may be a valuable asset or a piece of ancient family heritage, and eagerness to make a profit and/or rid themselves of a potential liability. This is not to say that either the new or old owners are malign. Far from it. Many, and perhaps most, of the restorers were motivated by a kind of altruism to save or rescue a piece of architectural heritage in danger. Most of them did just that, even if some carried out work which would not be acceptable to conservation architects and historians. From a pragmatic point of view, around a hundred buildings that might otherwise have continued to deteriorate, some even beyond the point of no return, are now lived in or regularly used. We know, by virtue of their personal narratives and the interviews that they gave, how the restorers went about it, how they felt and what motivated them. Good or bad, the act of restoring is certainly not neutral; this is one of the issues that will be discussed in chapter six.

The next chapter sums up the story of the twentieth century ‘Renaissance’ of Scottish castles and the dynamic nature of their recent history. It also addresses - and attempts to answer - the two

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<sup>665</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:L%27Avenc.JPG> accessed March 2011

research questions for a last time, through an overarching analysis of the many complex factors which contributed to the castle restoration phenomenon in postwar Scotland. *Why were so many Scottish castles rebuilt/bought for restoration in this period and who were the restoring owners?* Finally, the thesis is concluded with a look towards the future for Scotland's castles.

## CHAPTER SIX ANALYSES AND CONCLUSIONS

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The future study of castles in Scotland appears to be moving towards a socio-economic or sociological approach, ending its 150-year fixation with form over function.<sup>666</sup>

This thesis has looked at the recent history of castles in Scotland with at least as much attention to function as form, and has taken a sociological approach, among others, in its analyses of the owners and restorers. The multi-disciplinary nature of this research was laid out in the Introduction and in this concluding chapter the emphases of various perspectives, which accord different prominence to the many causal factors, will be explored. Together they contribute to the argument developed in the thesis, i.e. that the causes of the 'renaissance' of Scottish castles are numerous and interconnected; no one reason or one approach is on its own sufficient to explain the phenomenon of the great increase in rebuilding activity during the second half of the twentieth century. This final chapter will reprise the most significant factors which make up the context of the new 'Golden Age' of Scottish castles and towers from 1945 – 2010, in order to address the two thesis questions:

*Why were so many Scottish castles restored in this period, and who were the restoring owners?*

The short answer to the first question is that the zeitgeist was right: a conjunction of social, economic and political circumstances at this particular time, along with the availability of a large supply of small ruined towers in Scotland, created conditions which allowed a number of risk-taking individuals to make the leap from romantic dreaming (encouraged by media representations) to the practical business of buying and restoring a castle, thus transforming the landscape in parts of Scotland. A short answer is not sufficient, of course - significant social changes are always the product of a complex series of interrelationships. All of the restorers, no doubt, felt that they were acting entirely independently and out of free will - but they were also acting within a very particular social, economic, political, cultural and historical framework. Had they been born in the nineteenth century, or had they been Irish and living in Ireland, it is all but certain that they would never have purchased a ruin for restoration. Nobody wanted Broughty Castle, when it was for sale in 1821, after all<sup>667</sup>, and even in the 1950s and 1960s very few of the desperately decrepit – and very cheap – small towers or castles were bought and restored. Mike Rowan's 1952 newspaper cutting<sup>668</sup> and Nigel Tranter's list of twenty potentially restorable castles<sup>669</sup> and pleas within his books for restoration were all ignored. The time had to be 'right'. What happened in Scotland to Scottish castles after WW2 was carried out mainly by individuals, but it was nonetheless a *social* phenomenon of its time and place, in much the same way that the

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<sup>666</sup> Oram, 'Castles, Concepts and Contexts', 351

<sup>667</sup> See chapter one, *Castle Rebuilding and Reoccupation before 1945*

<sup>668</sup> See the Mains case study in chapter five

<sup>669</sup> Nigel Tranter 'Towers of Strength' **Scottish Field** July 1990

castles of the Rhine were restored at the end of the nineteenth century in a very particular economic, social, political and geographical situation<sup>670</sup>.

In Ireland, although the cultural and geographical situation was quite similar in many ways to that of Scotland, practically nobody – with the notable exception of Yeats – tried to rescue any of the many ruined towers and castles until the 1980s, and even then, relatively few restorations were carried out and those mostly by people from outside Ireland. In this context it is important to note that different outcomes of cultural behaviour do not necessarily require very different sets of social changes to be in operation - their expression depends upon a unique combination of local circumstances, from which is sometimes impossible to tease out which particular variables had the most significant influence. Ireland and Scotland had many factors in common, but their unique confluence in each made the two countries different enough to produce very different situations.

### **The factors**

So, what were the factors operating in Scotland between 1945 and 2010 that created a 'restoration climate'? The environment (social, economic and political), the media, the buildings and the owners all in their ways contributed to change. It has already been suggested, in figure 6, that the influences of and on each are inter-related and multi-directional. The main environmental factors include the increasing commodification, commercialization and subsequent democratization of access to castles; the erosion of social class boundaries, caused in part by greater prosperity, and the widening of the middle class; legislation to protect the historic built environment, supported by the HBC and HS; and increasing interest in heritage, fostered by the media. Other factors include the less tangible romantic attraction of both ruins and towers, as delineated in chapter one, and the appeal of the status of 'lairdship' for new owners. In addition to environmental factors, the owners and the buildings and their individual characteristics are essential parts of the story of the restoration of Scotland's castles; without both, there would be no 'renaissance'. It is, of course, impossible to quantify the proportion of influence which any one factor might have had in any kind of hierarchy, given the inter-relatedness of so many of them. But different theoretical perspectives and disciplines each emphasize the influence of different factors. History, which Felipe Fernandez-Armesto described as "fodder for Buridan's ass" (i.e. presenting tempting choices in different directions) nonetheless "should include all disciplines"<sup>671</sup>; in this thesis several disciplines have contributed to the overall picture, illustrating the rich variety of competing and overlapping discourses in the field of history.

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<sup>670</sup> See chapter two, *European Castles*

<sup>671</sup> Felipe Fernandez-Armesto 'Epilogue' in David Cannadine(ed) **What is History Now?** (2002) Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 152

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Theoretical/disciplinary emphasis</b>
Commodification	Marxist economics
Commercialization	Socio-economics
Democratization	Sociology
Social class changes	Sociology
Media	Media
Growth of heritage	Sociology
Politics, legislation & HS's role	Politics
Changes over time	History
Romance	History
The economy	Economics
The buildings	Architecture
The owners	Psychology & social constructivism

**Table 22 Explanatory factors and their theoretical emphases**

### **Commodification, commercialization and democratization**

Castles had always been powerfully attractive buildings, but general popularity and prestige were not sufficient to secure the future of many castles until the 'renaissance' really began to take off in the mid-1970s, when heritage became a desirable commodity. More specifically, in Marxist terms, the commodification of the cultural artifacts that are ruined and derelict castles occurred when they came to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value – commodities to be transformed, bought and sold. This was a process that started in the 1960s and developed with increasing numbers throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s; the chronological changes are described in chapter three. With each decade came not only more restorations, but a wider range of types of people buying castles for restoration, and also increasing attention from the media. During this period not only were more than two hundred castles rescued, or commodified (including the repairs as well as the restorations), more than five hundred sales were made on the open market. Many of these sales were by traditional, landowning owners who had held the house for

generations, to new owners from a different social class background, including celebrities and nouveaux riches entrepreneurs – although this remarkable change is not necessarily a reflection of wider changes in land ownership. It is worth noting that although many castles had always been in the ownership of one family, such as Traquair, many others had changed hands over the centuries; however before WW2 this was usually within an elite group of already landed buyers and sellers<sup>672</sup>. The linked concepts of commodification, commercialization and democratization applied to Scottish castles signal a shift away from the old, traditional view/role of the castle as part of the history and lineage of one ancient landed family.

Those old owners who did retain their property were often forced by financial reasons to open their castles, either for guided tours or hotel accommodation and weddings, increasingly managing maintenance costs through commercial enterprises. The blurring of social class boundaries helped to make not only access to castles but even ownership possible for ordinary people. Twenty-seven newly restored castles became accessible to members of the public through hotel or self-catering accommodation or guided tours and 180 castles in total offered accommodation and/or weddings in 2010. This in turn led to a democratization of Scottish castles, with ownership and access spread across a much broader spectrum of the population. The numbers of 'ordinary' people who have stayed in, or visited a castle must have risen enormously throughout the decades since WW2. Castles have become hotels, holiday lets, wedding and tourist venues; many more are open annually on Open Doors days and for specific groups occasionally. These are in addition to the HS and NTS castles open to the public, which number about eighty, and have seen increasing numbers of visitors each decade. Thus more and more citizens had access to castles which had been completely private and closed to previous generations of the general public.

### **Media representations and the growth of heritage**

Heritage and the past, as represented by the media and by historic building owners and museum curators, became what the historian David Lowenthal called, "a foreign country 'with a booming tourist trade'".<sup>673</sup> Robert Hewison's caustic analysis of the heritage industry as an economic exploitation of culture in order to mask a 'climate of decline'<sup>674</sup> and his linking of nostalgia for the past with 'all sorts of insecurities and doubts' is rather a cynical view of what many view more positively as a celebration of the past and a moral imperative to save and rescue historic buildings at risk. In the wider social context, there was an increasing acceptance of Heritage as an important construct in the formation and cementing of national and personal identity in Scotland, the UK and Europe throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and the focus on the iconic towers and castles of Scotland can be seen as an expression of this new concern for Heritage. The media

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<sup>672</sup> See Martin Coventry **The Castles of Scotland**, passim; he gives details of (changes of) ownership in most of the 3,000 plus entries

<sup>673</sup> Lowenthal, introduction, xvii

<sup>674</sup> Hewison **The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline**, passim

turned its focus onto Heritage as a desirable commodity in the 1970s, when the SAVE Britain's Heritage campaigns began to harness effective ways of garnering attention (see chapter two), signifying a swing from the disdain in which 'old things' were held post WW2 to an honouring and glorifying of the past. Nostalgia was fostered by popular television programmes such as *The Forsyte Saga*<sup>675</sup> in 1967 and twenty years later, *Brideshead Revisited*. In the 1990s, the decade in which the highest number of castles was restored, restoration as an activity began to excite the interest of the media. Nearly all of the many newspaper quotations about castle restorations in this thesis – probably only a fraction of the total published – date from the early 1990s onwards, when restoration narratives came to feature increasingly in the property pages of newspapers and magazines and on television programmes. Restoration as an exciting leisure activity caught the public imagination. Through media representations castle ownership and restoration became seen as something not only desirable, but *possible*. It is argued that the media had a profound influence on the societal value placed on historic buildings and were instrumental in the creation of the 'restoration climate' which fostered the increased building activity throughout the latter part of the period at least.

### Economic factors

Economically, in 1945 Scotland was a poor country, but like the rest of the UK it saw a steady rise in standards of living and economic growth over the next few decades, despite dips and troughs. Those who were rebuilding in the 1970s were doing so in a period of rampant inflation and difficulties in raising finance. Robert Clow at Aiket was very upset by the delay in receiving listed building consent from the HBC: "With inflation rising above a rate of 27% p.a., and nearly a year's delay, we became distinctly nervous over the cost implications of yet more delay."<sup>676</sup> When the Clows tried to obtain a mortgage for the rebuilding of Aiket they were turned down by every Scottish Building Society they approached and had to go to London.<sup>677</sup> At Rusco the Carsons started the building work in 1975 but had to stop for two periods between then and 1979 due to lack of money.<sup>678</sup> Both families managed to complete the rebuilding work despite their financial difficulties, however, as did others who followed, such as Ken Murdoch at Methven, who had no cost plan and an almost cavalier attitude to possible problems. Whatever their financial situation, it is clear that the majority of restorers were not doing it to make a profit. The current recession that began in late 2007 may become the cause of less demand for high end housing such as castles in Scotland, but it is impossible to give a clear picture, since the variations between regions over time are enormous – for example, house prices between the third quarters of 2009 and 2010 stayed the same in Argyll and Bute, went up by 14.2% in East Lothian and dropped by 6% in Perth and Kinross<sup>679</sup> – making overall national statistics all but meaningless. The graph of projects begun

<sup>675</sup> **The Forsyte Saga** BBC (1967) 25 episodes

<sup>676</sup> Clow in Clow, 97

<sup>677</sup> Ibid, 107

<sup>678</sup> Carson in Clow, 163

<sup>679</sup> [http://www.ros.gov.uk/public/news/press\\_release\\_flash/la\\_map1110.html](http://www.ros.gov.uk/public/news/press_release_flash/la_map1110.html)

(table 17) does not tie in with national economic circumstances – it cannot explain why numbers between 2000-2010 are so much lower than 1990 – 1999 since 2000 – 2007 were years of prosperity and boom. General economic factors are impossible to pinpoint; buying and restoring a ruined castle is a relatively rare activity and the relationship to boom or recession in the national economy seems random.

### **Political factors and the role of the HBC and HS and grants**

The politics of the rise in heritage were championed by a number of dedicated individuals and campaigning organizations that pushed for change, harnessing the power of the media to help them, as described in chapter two. Changes in legislation gave increased protection to ruinous buildings at risk of demolition and occurred hand in hand with changes in media and public attitudes. Problems with local authorities and government buildings inspectors may have been frustrating, in the same way that financial difficulties caused challenges, but they did not actually stop any projects which had started from going ahead, except, possibly Duntarvie (see chapter four, *The Failed Projects*). Although David Walker credited grant-aid with significant success it was the supportive attitude, or perhaps rather the decision not to oppose applications to restore, as much as the money that enabled the restorations to go ahead. Grant-aid certainly helped some restoring owners, and may even have been an inducement, but it only supplied a proportion of the total funds needed for each project – often only a quarter or so of the *actual* costs - and was useless without a risk-taking individuals who were prepared to buy the property before even knowing whether they would be financially supported by HS, or, in many cases, be allowed to proceed with rebuilding. Other political factors include the rise in Scottish nationalism, although there is no evidence that this was a major influence on castle restoration. The restorers were not motivated *explicitly* to demonstrate a love for Scottish heritage, apart from the ‘heritage’ group, although this is implicit in the behaviour of the kilt-wearing owners such as Graham Carson of Rusco and Raymond Morris of Balgonie, or those who decorate their castle with bare stone walls, tartan upholstery and displays of weaponry and suits of armour. The restored buildings which make money from paying guests usually display the visual trappings of iconic Scottishness to a greater or lesser degree, but this may be in order to give the customers what they expect, rather than the personal choice of the owners.





FIGURE 81 ACKERGILL TOWER: SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING FOR GUESTS<sup>680</sup>

### The buildings

Added to the environmental factors was the availability of large numbers of small, ruined towers for sale in Scotland, which were on a domestic enough scale to be restored as family homes. Indeed, if the buildings had not been both available *and* desirable there would have been no 'renaissance'. Sometimes they became available because owners saw them as a liability in the face of perceived pressure from local authorities to care for them and also because they felt vulnerable, in an increasingly litigious society, to the danger of being sued if someone was injured while in their ruined building. Also, castles sometimes became available because a farmer became aware of the increased value of a ruin in a field and decided to turn a potentially costly building into a money earner, or because an old owner was under financial pressure and needed to release some equity. In some cases there was doubtless an altruistic motive, a genuine desire to see a ruin restored, such as the Duke of Buccleuch's support of the restorations of Aikwood and Kirkhope towers. The buildings were desirable to would-be restorers because they *looked like castles*, even if they were blatant fakes, such as Glenapp or Formakin. Miles Glendinning highlighted "the prestige of the Scottish castle as building type and image right through from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and on, in consciously revived form, into the 19<sup>th</sup> century." He went on:

The reasons for its popularity have been hotly disputed: while R. W. Billings in the 1840s assumed it was the unintentionally picturesque by-product of barons who 'cared for nothing but eating, drinking and fighting', barely fifty years later Robert Lorimer, like today's historians, could see the castle above all as 'a Scotch gentleman's home'. But whatever the rhetoric and the theories, its pervasiveness and persistence on the ground cannot be denied.<sup>681</sup>

<sup>680</sup> <http://www.celticcastles.com/castles/ackergill-tower/popup/pop.asp?image=imagelarge24>  
accessed March 2011

<sup>681</sup> Miles Glendinning and Aonghus MacKechnie **Scottish Architecture** (2004) Thames and Hudson, London, 216

Certainly, the castle has been ‘pervasive and persistent’ in Scotland, but it was also frequently neglected and in its nineteenth century Baronial form, much scorned and reviled until at least the 1980s. Most of the ‘castles’ restored were not houses of the first rank; indeed many were small laird’s houses which had never been particularly large or significant buildings, such as Barholm or Hallbar. Manageable size may have been a useful factor for a number of restorers but scale did not put off every would-be restorer, such as those at Niddry or Duncraig, and all of the European castle restorations described in chapter five involved very large buildings.

### The owners

Although the interaction of the social, political and economic factors was responsible for developing the climate and the availability of buildings sourced the supply, it was the restoring owners, the majority of whom were individuals and their families, who initiated and carried out the work. Without them, there would have been no restorations. Many bought the properties, often spending years negotiating to buy and not knowing whether or not they would be allowed to rebuild, or receive a grant. The narrative testimonies, both first-person and reported, give us a view into the worlds of the restorers and an idea of their motives and motivations. They paint a picture of people driven by a romantic, anti-modernist idealism and a desire to repair something fractured. The more reflective of the restorers talk in terms of a madness or an obsession, and many were explicitly in pursuit of a dream and prepared to undergo a series of rigorous and demanding tests, involving both physical and financial hardships, to achieve that dream. Psychoanalytic explanations, such as those rooted in Adlerian, Freudian or Jungian theory, would suggest that childhood experiences had a fundamental importance in shaping these dreams. The hardship which many restorers suffered, and of which they seemed so proud, can be explained by the theory of cognitive dissonance (see chapter four) and/or Adlerian striving (see chapter five). In his social history of the English country house, Marc Girouard looked at the question of why people bought country houses: “They wanted to own a country house ... because they were in love with the idea of a country house – because it represented to them peace, tradition, beauty and dignity”<sup>682</sup> To paraphrase, those who bought Scottish castles were in love with the idea of a Scottish castle – because it represented to them romance and tradition and the status of what Robert Lorimer called ‘a Scotch gentleman’s home’<sup>683</sup>.

The statistics in chapter three go some way to answering the question, *who were the restorers?* The six groups of individual restoring owner identified (heritage, wealthy, middle class, architects, dreamers and developers) illustrate a range of types with a range of reasons for taking on a restoration project. The use of statistics in the surveys of owners and buildings is justified in the methodology section of the introduction and the potential dangers of a positivistic approach acknowledged. Cowan and Finlay argued: “It is this dichotomy of a methodology which is largely

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<sup>682</sup> Marc Girouard **Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History** (1978) Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 302

<sup>683</sup> Quoted in Miles Glendinning and Aonghus MacKechnie **Scottish Architecture**, 216

in keeping with the social sciences based on empiricism and a usage dictated by the predominantly subjective qualities of the humanities that makes the study of the past so intriguing. In recent years, however, the bedrock of empiricism has come under attack from the citadel of post-modernism.”<sup>684</sup> Indeed, the social sciences have moved steadily away from an emphasis on empiricism, as postmodernist ideas have taken hold, to a more social constructivist approach in which individuals are viewed as creating meaning through their interactions with each other and with the environment they live in. ‘Reality’ thus becomes relative and not readily amenable to statistical analysis. The empiricism in this research is counterbalanced by the qualitative results of the personal narratives and the media extracts which complete the pictures from detailed individual perspectives, constituting at least a nod to the emphasis of postmodernism on personal testimony. But the narratives of the commitment and motivation of individuals, no matter how detailed, can never show the whole picture; for that, the addition of statistical information about numbers of restorations and types of owners is necessary.

As was shown in table 6, both the building and the owner are at the centre of a complex system of environmental layers, each having a potential effect on the restoration and operating in multiple directions. So, for example, while the political set-up and financial clout of both the local and national governmental authorities (level 3) will influence what happens to the building, both the building itself – its setting, its aesthetic appeal, its potential for enhancing the environment – and the owner, through his/her personality, political influence and financial assets, will influence the local authority in its decisions, and so on, across the layers. Thus, it is the *interactions* of various factors which have driven the increase in castle restorations, rather than the influence of any one or two variables. Information on some factors is not available, or not in the public domain: for example, the strain on marriages and family relationships which any major risk-taking venture causes is well-known, and several marriages did not survive long after the restoration of a castle or tower. Whether or not the divorces were a direct result of the building projects is not known and evidence would be anecdotal. Information on other players and their relationships with the restorers is also lacking. The roles of the architects, builders, surveyors, historians and HS officers who supported (or in some cases undermined) the restorer’s efforts are not often reflected in the narratives, but their influence may have been significant.

Were the individual owners exceptional? In the sense that they had both the determined staying power and the financial wherewithal - which others lacked - to complete their projects, the answer must be yes. Castle purchase and restoration had gradually begun to seem accessible to ‘ordinary’ people and not just those from high status backgrounds, as the social class hierarchy in Scotland leveled out during the second half of the twentieth century. For many, their identity became bound up with their castle. James Brown described himself as “just an ordinary man from a working-class background” and went on: “How I created a vision of Baltersan RESTORED from my boyhood dream is in many ways, a tale of who I am and who I have become.”<sup>685</sup> The

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<sup>684</sup> Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay (eds) **Scottish History. The Power of the Past** (2002) Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 3

<sup>685</sup> [http://www.baltersan.com/james\\_brown\\_fsa\\_scot](http://www.baltersan.com/james_brown_fsa_scot) accessed Oct 09

corporate restorers described in section two of chapter three were, like the individual owners, a mixed group with mixed motives; they were often driven by one or two highly motivated individuals, such as Ian Begg and LAL Rolland of Rossend, or David Lumsden at Liberton Tower. Given that activity by committee is often much more problematic than individual action, with more scope for disagreement, inertia and muddle, the fifteen completed corporate projects should be seen as a real triumph of hope over experience.

Only two factors are necessary for a restoration to take place: enough finance on the part of the owner, and acquiescence on the part of the planning authorities. If either is absent, nothing can progress. Yet although these factors are necessary, they are not sufficient. There is a tension between the essentially personal and individual nature of the projects and the fact that the restorations were part of a large scale social movement. The narrative testimonies provide evidence of the former, although the coherence of their themes, particularly romance and striving, exemplifies the similarities of the restoring owners' preoccupations and motives. The castle rebuilding projects described in this thesis were part of a movement with its roots in the wider, multi-faceted social world of economics, politics and the media rather than a series of discrete actions on the part of various individuals and groups. Many interconnected factors contributed to this movement: for example, the changes in social class and the economy went hand in hand, and the growth of heritage was championed by the media. Not only are they interconnected, but they changed markedly over time, even although the chronological timescale of this research is relatively short. The story of the restorations of Scottish castles is just one illustration of the dynamic but largely unreported history of castles since WW2.

As stated in the abstract, this thesis has described a 'Golden Age' or 'renaissance' of castle building in the second half of the twentieth century. These two terms imply a positive judgment about the outcomes of the activity that took place. Were the rebuilding and repair projects beneficial? Was the recent restoration renaissance a Good Thing? The answer, as has been argued both implicitly and explicitly throughout the thesis, is unequivocally yes - despite a number of specific reservations. Many of the earlier restorations, including for example Kinkell and Stobhall, were not 'successful' in current terms, in that inappropriate materials, such as cement, were used, careful archaeological recording did not take place and some irreversible damage may have been done to fragile structures. But this does not mean that they should not have been rebuilt. The alternative, which in most cases would have been the final destruction and loss of an already crumbling building, is surely a worse outcome. Which is better - to be saved imperfectly or to be lost forever? Imperfection in the rebuilding process seems a small price to pay for the retention of a historically significant building.

The majority of the restored buildings described in this thesis were not houses of the first rank - unlike, for example, Stirling Castle, the restoration of which took 35 years and cost Historic Scotland 12 million pounds - but, rather, small to medium-sized laird's houses, suitable for individual use. But their domesticity is no argument against their worth. As Nigel Tranter put it, "These fortalices represent a heritage unequalled anywhere else in the world and together their

stories make up a colourful tapestry that is the very history of Scotland.”<sup>686</sup> The loss of over one hundred such buildings through sheer neglect and what Scott-Moncrieff termed ‘aesthetic sluggardliness’ would have been a tragic waste. To take a purely pragmatic view – if the castles described in this thesis had not been rescued, this would surely be a waste of the resources of a small country which trades in historic buildings, and particularly castles, as a major means of attracting tourists. Scotland markets its castles in the same way that it markets tartan and lochside scenery. For visitors to see many of the buildings which they associate with Scottishness in a desperately dilapidated state would not be good for business. And for the people who live in Scotland, for most of whom the towers and castles are iconic buildings, is their national environment not poorer for each building that disintegrates? The message sent out to the world before the mid-1970s, which made McGibbon and Ross and Tranter and other campaigners despair, was that Scotland did not care about its historic built heritage; it was seen as entirely expendable.

The role of Historic Scotland, formerly the Historic Buildings Council, in the rescue of many of the buildings described in this research was, on the whole, a positive one, despite the perceptions of meddlesome unhelpfulness on the part of some owner restorers. HS gave money and support to owners and encouraged the saving and restoration of a number of buildings which might otherwise have been destroyed. The organization’s opposition to some potential restorations, such as Castle Tioram, has recently been tempered by political intervention; it is through political action, at both national and international levels, that the protection of historic buildings has been enshrined in law and this has been to the advantage of Scotland’s castles.

Charles McKean called the Scots a ‘nation of adapters’ and that is what they have demonstrated in their changing uses of the castles which have been restored and used for a variety of new purposes (see table 11 for the breakdown of end uses). About one quarter of the restorations opened up the building for extended access, either as holiday accommodation or as offices or as a clan centre; most of the rest became family homes or second homes, as they had been intended originally. The restored castles have not been pickled in aspic, but have mostly been added to Scotland’s housing stock, albeit at the top end. They have become a useful and productive part of the Scottish landscape once again – thus, the outcome of the restorations has been positive. The anti-heritage sneering of Samuel’s ‘metropolitan intelligentsia’ and the ideological anti-restoration rhetoric of SPAB are the voices of an elite minority. The majority of the people of the UK and of Scotland in particular are now – thanks largely to representations in the media – in favour of ‘heritage’ and protection. In spite of the fact that best conservation practice has not always been followed, in the case of the rescue of Scotland’s castles the end has justified the means.

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<sup>686</sup> Nigel Tranter **The Fortified House in Scotland Volume 2** (1962), dustjacket

## CONCLUSIONS

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Two research questions were posed about the 'Golden Age' of Scottish castle restoration: why and who? The reasons why so many castles were restored in this period are complex but identifiable, if not quantifiable, and have been traced in a series of interrelationships between social, political and economic factors. Such broad issues leave out the personal aspects of behaviour and these were addressed in the answers sought to the second question, of *who* were the individuals who carried out the restorations. A third question is implicit if the thesis is not to be simply a descriptive analysis of what was done by whom and why. This is essentially a moral question, of whether the restorations were beneficial. The broad conclusion here is positive; that, despite the fact that not all restorations were well conceived or executed, the saving of well over one hundred significant and iconic historic buildings that would otherwise have been lost was overall of great benefit to Scotland.

This thesis has drawn a picture of the complex and fascinating world of contemporary rebuilding activity involving Scottish castles that has never been shown in its entirety before. In the second half of the twentieth century, when a unique combination of factors came together, the zeitgeist in Scotland was right for the rescue and rebuilding of over one hundred ruinous and derelict towers and castles and the repair of as many others, resulting in a level of building activity that had not been seen for five hundred years, and which successfully saved these historically significant buildings for the future. Those individuals who carried out the restorations were each guided by a personal, romantic vision that melded with the visions of their fellow restorers to form a growing movement that became the new 'renaissance' which this thesis has described and in which the author participated.

When we trace the connection between the present and the past and mark the openings of a scene in which we ourselves bear a part, a period of greater interest appears, and historical studies come home to mankind. (Gilbert Stuart 1782)<sup>687</sup>

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<sup>687</sup> Quoted in Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay (eds) **Scottish History. The Power of the Past** (2002) Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2

## CODA: THE FUTURE FOR SCOTTISH CASTLES?

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"It only takes one generation not to do any restoration and it becomes impossible. When my parents came to live here when I was five, we had to put basins under all the leaks." Russell applauds people who rescue castles, because the buildings are a vital part of the Scottish tourist industry and because "they need to be lived in and loved".<sup>688</sup>

At the time of completing this thesis, Historic Scotland is about to publish a guide for potential restorers and has just published *Renewed Life for Scottish Castles*<sup>689</sup>, with a series of eleven modern restoration case studies "which it is hoped will be of value for everyone with an interest in castles, including those who might be considering undertaking work on one."<sup>690</sup> The turnaround in attitude towards restorers, from apparent disdain to welcoming encouragement, which this publication appears to herald on the part of HS, means that castle restoration may become more accessible to potential restorers, bureaucratically at least. As the guardian of the historic built environment HS must hold restorers to account, and stick to the spirit, at least, of the various European conservation conventions; but judging when to offer helpful advice and when to use authority flexibly is tricky for an organisation bound by rules and procedures and prone to ideological partisanship.

However, the next decades may not see such a positive future for ruined and derelict Scottish castles, particularly if recent economic changes mean a slow-down in financial markets and an ensuing atmosphere of austerity leads to changed priorities which negatively affect the care of historic buildings. Ian Cumming, builder of at least six of the restored castles described in this thesis, issued a public warning at the 1991 AHSS Castles Conference: "It is futile to believe that these towers will remain for future generations to see or to excavate, should they be left unrestored as a matter of policy or fail to be professionally stabilized."<sup>691</sup> By 'policy' Cumming refers to the doctrinaire SPAB policy which views restoration as an abomination and which some Historic Scotland inspectors seemed to embrace in the 1980s and 90s. Here it is spelled out in this quote of 1900 by Ruskin:

Do not let us talk then of restoration. The thing is a Lie from beginning to end. You may make a model of a building as you may of a corpse, and your model may have the shell of the old walls within it as your cast might have the skeleton, with what advantage I neither see nor care: but the old building is destroyed, and that more totally and mercilessly than if it had sunk into a heap of dust, or melted into a mass of clay.<sup>692</sup>

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<sup>688</sup> Cunningham, Jennifer, "The keepers of our castles; what's the future for our ancestral piles?" February 27, 2004 **The Herald (Glasgow)** The quote is by Clare Russell Macpherson-Grant of Ballindalloch castle, whose family has lived there since 1546.

<sup>689</sup> Richard Fawcett and Allan Rutherford **Renewed Life for Scottish Castles** (2011)

<sup>690</sup> [http://www.amazon.com/Renewed-Scottish-Castles-Research-Report/dp/1902771869/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1304601529&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Renewed-Scottish-Castles-Research-Report/dp/1902771869/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1304601529&sr=8-1) accessed May 2011

<sup>691</sup> Ian Cumming in Clow, 191

<sup>692</sup> John Ruskin **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** (1889), Sunnyside, London, 196

This is Victorian rhetoric, adducing moral arguments to forward the conservationist cause. Calling the debate a moral one may invest it with more gravitas than it deserves, however – these are buildings after all, and not people, no matter how often they are personified in the literature. But the question of whether ruinous historic buildings *should* be rebuilt and reoccupied is still a vexed one, with the controversial cases of Tioram and Rowallan exemplifying the continuing debate. Historic Scotland's recent *Scottish Castles Initiative* and its new publications may signal a politically-driven change in the organization's philosophy, but the real test will be its behaviour and practice in the future.

During the early part of the post WW2 period, 65 castles were demolished, the majority quite needlessly, but from 1975 on, castles benefited from the increasing appreciation and protection of historic buildings in Scotland and the UK and Europe. Predicting the future is a very dangerous sport<sup>693</sup>, but, unless some major nationwide catastrophe occurs, it is difficult to imagine the castles of Scotland which have already been restored and repaired returning to their vulnerable state. There may be less money and even less will to restore historic buildings in the future, but the work that has been done to restore and substantially repair over 200 buildings since WW2 seems likely to endure. What the future holds for the fifty or so castles still at risk of collapse can only be guessed in the uncertain economic climate of 2011. It would be comforting to think they could all at least be secured from further degeneration, but that would require a great deal of financial investment. In the future, it seems likely that those buildings that have been 'rescued' since WW2 will remain in good order, provided that the top-end housing market in Scotland at least holds it value. They will be joined by others that are currently at risk, either as consolidations or rebuilt as homes - but only if they are in attractive and accessible locations, which in practice means a small number. David Walker is probably correct in his prediction: ".....inevitably the era of tower-house restoration is drawing towards its close for the very simple reason that the number of towers capable of restoration and available for purchase is now so limited."<sup>694</sup> However, because of the position of increasing numbers of Scottish castles as commodities in the high-end housing market, rather than as physical expressions of ancient lineage, more are likely to be exchanged between wealthy buyers rather than deteriorate from generation to generation of old families with decreasing resources. On these terms, the foreseeable future for most of Scotland's castles looks relatively rosy and secure.

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<sup>693</sup> "We do not know what the political and social world of the twenty-first century will look like, but we do know that the past will be a fairly poor predictor of the future." David McCrone, **Sociology**, 2

<sup>694</sup> Walker in Clow, 29





FIGURE 82 WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR SCOTTISH CASTLES?

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## Appendix 1

### Scottish castles reoccupied from a (near) ruinous state 1945 – 2010

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Restoring owners</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Abbots Tower</b>	D & G	Peter Kormylo	1994 - 2004
<b>Ackergill Tower</b>	Wick	John & Arlette Banister	1986 - 88
<b>Aiket</b>	Ayrshire	Robert & Katrina Clow	1976 - 80
<b>Aikwood</b>	Borders	David & Judy Steele	1990s
<b>Aldie Castle</b>	Kinross-shire	Mr Hope-Dickson	1957 complete
<b>Allardice</b>	Kincardine	Andrew Cowie	1990s?
<b>Alloa Tower</b>	Alloa	Alloa Tower Trust	1990-96
<b>Balbithan</b>	Aberdeenshire	McMurtries	late 50s/early 60s
<b>Balfluir</b>	Aberdeenshire	Mark Tennant	1966 - 67
<b>Balgonie</b>	Fife	Raymond Morris	1971, 1985 ongoing
<b>Ballencrieff</b>	near Edinburgh	Peter Gillies	1990s
<b>Ballone</b>	Highland	Lachie & Annie Stewart	1990 - 95
<b>Balmuto</b>	Fife	Harry Boswell	1970 - 90
<b>Barholm Castle</b>	D&G	John & Janet Brennan	2003 - 2006
<b>Barns Tower</b>	Peebles	Vivat Trust	1990s
<b>Barscobe Castle</b>	D&G	Sir Hugh Wontner	1971-87
<b>Blackhall manor</b>	Renfrewshire	Alex Strachan	1982-3
<b>Borthwick</b>	Midlothian	Helen Bailey	1970s
<b>Breachacha</b>	Coll	Major McLean-Bristol	1965 begun
<b>Broomhall</b>	Clackmannan	David Burns	1985 begun
<b>Buittle Tower</b>	D&G	Geoffrey & Janet Burns	1990s
<b>Breeze's Tower</b>	Glasgow	anon	1980s
<b>Carnousie</b>	Aberdeenshire	Ian Mutch?	1970s
<b>Castle Cary</b>	Bonnybridge	Bob Hunter	1995 begun
<b>Castle Levan</b>	Gourock	David & Sheila Pearson	1984 - 87
<b>Castle Menzies</b>	Perthshire	Menzies clan	1970s
<b>Castle of Mey</b>	Highland	The Queen Mother	1950s
<b>Castle of Park</b>	D & G	Landmark Trust	1970s
<b>Castle Stalker</b>	Argyll	Lt Col. Stewart Allward	1965 - 75
<b>Castle Stuart</b>	Inverness-shire	Charles & Eliz. Stuart	1977 begun
<b>Couston Castle</b>	Fife	Alastair Harper	1986- 1988
<b>Comlongon</b>	D&G	Tony Ptolomey	1984-91
<b>Craigcaffie</b>	Stranraer, D&G	anon	1980s
<b>Craigrownie</b>	Argyll	Peter Hewkin	1996 begun
<b>Cramond Castle</b>	near Edinburgh	Eric Jamieson	1970s
<b>Dairsie Castle</b>	Fife	Chris Ruffle	1993-96
<b>Dudhope Castle</b>	Dundee	City Council	1985 begun
<b>Duncraig</b>	Ross & Cromarty	Sam & Perlin Dobson	2003-6
<b>Dunduff</b>	Ayrshire	Dr John Ferguson	1990-99
<b>Edinample</b>	Stirlingshire	Peter Nicholson	late 1970s
<b>Fawside Castle</b>	Tranent	Tom Craig	1976 - 82
<b>Fenton Tower</b>	near Edinburgh	Ian Simpson	1998 - 2002
<b>Fetteresso</b>	Aberdeenshire	Mrs Simpson?	1992 begun
<b>Fordell</b>	Fife	Nicholas Fairbairn	1961-62
<b>Fordyce</b>	Banffshire	Bob Crabbe	2000 begun
<b>Formakin</b>	Renfrewshire	Kit Martin	1990s

<b>Forter Castle</b>	Perthshire	Robert Pooley	1988 -1990?
<b>Gagie House</b>	Dundee	France Smoor	1980s
<b>Garth Castle</b>	Glenlyon	Mr Fry	early 1960s
<b>Gilnockie Tower</b>	Borders	Colin Armstrong	1978-80
<b>Glenapp</b>	Galloway	Graham & Fay Cowan	1994 - 2000
<b>Gogar</b>	Edinburgh	Scott & Lesley Seath	2005 begun
<b>Hallbar</b>	Renfrewshire	Vivat Trust	complete 2000
<b>Harthill Castle</b>	Aberdeenshire	Ann Tweedy Savage	1975 -1977
<b>Hatton Castle</b>	Angus	Roderick Oliphant	1986 - 89
<b>Hillslap</b>	Borders	Philip Mercer	1977 begun
<b>Inverquharity</b>	Angus	Sandy Grant	1960s
<b>Kilmartin</b>	Argyll	Tom and Olive Clarke	1990S
<b>Kinlochaline</b>	Morvern	Hugh and Jane Raven	1998 - 2000
<b>Kinkell</b>	Inverness-shire	Gerald Laing	1969 -1970
<b>Kirkhope Tower</b>	Selkirkshire	Peter & Gillian Clarke	1996 begun
<b>Kisimul</b>	Western Isles	Robert MacNeil	1938 - 1970
<b>Knockbrex</b>	D & G	Daniel Sharpe	1991 begun
<b>Law Castle</b>	Ayrshire	Mr Phillips (partly)	1983 - 98 - 2005
<b>Leslie Castle</b>	Aberdeenshire	David & Leslie Leslie	1980s - 90s
<b>Liberton House</b>	Edinburgh	Nicholas Groves-Raines	1993 - 1999
<b>Liberton Tower</b>	Edinburgh	Castles of Scotland P.T.	1990s
<b>Lochhouse Tower</b>	D & G	Tom and Olive Clarke	about 1980
<b>Mains</b>	East Kilbride	Mike Rowan	1980s/ from 1976
<b>Mains of Fintry</b>	Dundee	Dundee Council	1977 - 85
<b>Melgund</b>	Forfar	Martyn & Penelope Gregory	1990 - 2002
<b>Menstrie Castle</b>	Clackmannan	County Council	1957-61
<b>Merchiston Castle</b>	Edinburgh	Napier University	1958-64
<b>Methven</b>	Perthshire	Ken & Anna Murdoch	1984-9
<b>Midmar</b>	Aberdeenshire	Ric and Jackie Wharton	1977 -84
<b>Monimail Tower</b>	Fife	Monimail Trust	1985-99
<b>Muckrach Castle</b>	Moray	Calthorpe Estates	1978-85
<b>Mugdock</b>	Glasgow	E.Dunbartonshire Council	1990-2005
<b>Newmilns Tower</b>	Ayrshire	Strathclyde Trust	1994-96
<b>Niddrie Castle</b>	Linlithgow	Wrights then Nairns	late 70s/early 80s
<b>Ochiltree</b>	West Lothian	Walter Goldsmith	1981 - 84
<b>Old Leckie</b>	Stirlingshire	Bobby Younger	1970s
<b>Old Sauchie</b>	Clackmannan	Sandy Leask	2001 begun
<b>Peffermill House</b>	Edinburgh	Nicholas Groves-Raines	1980-85
<b>Pitfichie</b>	Aberdeenshire	Colin Wood	1978-96
<b>Pitcullo</b>	Fife	Roy Spence	1971 begun
<b>Plane</b>	Stirlingshire	Nancy & John Wright	1991-97
<b>Powrie</b>	Angus	Gillian Strickland	1977-80
<b>Ravenstone</b>	D&G	Sue & Steve Atterton	1970s & 2001 begun
<b>Rossend</b>	Fife	Robt Hurd & Partners	1975 begun
<b>Rosslyn</b>	Midlothian	Landmark Trust	1984-88
<b>Rusco</b>	D & G	Graham & Buffy Carson	1975 - 79
<b>Saddell</b>	Kintyre	Landmark Trust	1973 - 8
<b>Spedlins</b>	D&G	Stephen Yorke	late 70s or 88-89?
<b>Stobhall</b>	Perthshire	Earl of Perth	1953 for 20 years
<b>Stoneypath</b>	Borders	Mr Cole	1999 - 2001
<b>Sundrum</b>	Ayrshire	Salopie Estates	1996 begun



<b>Tillycairn</b>	Aberdeenshire	David Lumsden	1979-81
<b>Tilquhillie Castle</b>	Aberdeenshire	Dr John Coyne	1991 begun
<b>Terpersie</b>	Aberdeenshire	Capt Lachlan Rhodes	1982 begun
<b>Towie Barclay</b>	Aberdeenshire	Marc Ellington	1960s
<b>Whytbank Tower</b>	Borders	Pringle family	1988 - 92

## Appendix 2 Castles and castellated mansions demolished or destroyed after 1945

Abercairney Abbey	Perthshire
Airdrie House	Lanarkshire
Aldbar Castle	Angus & Dundee
Altyre House	Moray
Ancrum House	Borders
Appin House	Argyll
Ardincaple	Helensburgh
Ardmillan House	Girvan
Auchinvole	on banks of Kelvin
Badenheath Castle	Kirkintilloch
Balconie Castle	Ross & Cromarty
Balfour House	Fife
Bantaskine	Falkirk
Belton House	Lothian
Blackhall castle	Banchory
Bonhard	Stirlingshire; W.Loithian?
Bothwell Castle	Haddington E.Loithian
Brahan	Nairn
Broomhill Castle	Lanarkshire
Busbie Tower aka	
Cunninghamhead	Ayrshire
Calderwood	East Kilbride
Carbet Castle	Dundee
Castle Semple	Renfrewshire
Castle Wemyss	Ayrshire
Castlemilk House	Glasgow
Castleroy House	Dundee
Castlewigg	Galloway
Cathcart Castle	Glasgow
Cavers House	Hawick
Comrie	Fife
Craigends House	Renfrewshire
Craighall	Fife
Cramalt	nr Selkirk
Douglas Castle	Lanarkshire
Dreghorn Castle	Colinton, Edinburgh
Drumry Castle	Glasgow
Dunmore House	Argyll
Dupplin Castle	Perthshire
Easter Greenock Castle	Renfrewshire
Eglinton	Ayrshire
Elphinstone Tower	near Tranent
Faichfield House	Aberdeenshire
Farne Castle	Lanarkshire
Gordon Castle	Moray
Granton Castle	Lothian, nr Edinburgh
Halleaths	Galloway
Hallyards Castle	Lothian, nr Edinburgh
Harviestoun Castle	Clackmannanshire

Hatton House	Lothian
Helmsdale Castle	Sutherland
Herbertshire Castle	Falkirk
Hoddum	Dumfriesshire
Johnstone (wings)	Johnstone
Kilmaron Castle	Fife
Kinbeachie	Highland
Kincraig Castle	Fife
Lanrick Castle	Doune
Largie Castle	Argyll
Lauchope House	Lanarkshire
Lockerbie Tower	Dumfriesshire
Lochton Castle	Nr Perth
Logan Tower	Midlothian
Logie-Elphinstone Castle	Aberdeenshire
Macbiehill	Borders
Macduff	Fife
Minto House	Hawick
Mugdock Castle Mansion House	Glasgow
Murthly Castle (new)	Perthshire
Panmure House	Angus
Pollok Castle	Newton Mearns
Old Jerviston House	Lanarkshire
Polmaise castle	Stirlingshire
Rockville	Edinburgh
Rosehaugh House	Black Isle
Rosneath Castle	Strathclyde, nr Helensburgh
Rossie Castle	Angus
Rothiemay Castle	NE Scotland (River Deveron)
Stenhouse	Stirlingshire
Terregles Castle	D&G
Thurso Castle	Sutherland
Towie castle	Aberdeenshire
Tulliechewan castle	Dunbartonshire
Woolmet House	Midlothian

### **Appendix 3 Castles used for military purposes during WW2**

**Achnacarry** - Commando Training Depot for the Allied Forces from 1942 to 1945.

**Auchendennan House** at Arden on the west shore of Loch Lomond, was home to the Searchlight Sites Headquarters of the 12th Anti-Aircraft Division.

**Balconie Castle** - the building was requisitioned by the army and used as a billet.

**Balhouses Castle** - during the Second World War, the property was used by the Auxiliary Training Service as Officers Quarters.

**Bolfracks House** - Polish nurses were billeted in the house in association with the hospital at Taymouth.

**Borthwick** – was used to store the Scottish Public Records

**Bowhill** - a barracks for troops

**Braal Castle** - was requisitioned by the army during WWII; Winston Churchill stayed in the castle at some point during this time.

**Broughty Castle** was used by the military from 1939 to 1949.

**Brucklay Castle** – Italian and German prisoners of war were kept there.

**Buchanan castle** – was a military hospital (Rudolph Hess treated there.)

**Castle Grant** - Indian soldiers were billeted in the castle during World War II, during which part of it was badly damaged by fire.

**Castle of Mey** – used to billet Coastal Defence troops.

**Castle Menzies** – used as a Polish Army medical supplies depot.

**Cortachy Castle** – used as a hospital for Polish soldiers.

**Coxton Tower** – Canadian soldiers were stationed there.

**Craigdarroch House** – occupied by a special unit of the Norwegian army.

**Dalkeith Palace** - Polish troops of the 3rd Flanders Rifle Brigade, part of the 1st Polish Armoured Division, were quartered on the third floor of Dalkeith Palace from 1942 onwards.

**Dalnaglar** – used by Canadian paratroopers.

**Dargavel House** – formed part of the former Royal Ordnance Factory facility at Bishopton which adapted all the buildings on site as part of the business of manufacturing armament propellants.

**Dollarbeg Castle** - used as an intelligence base.

**Drumlanrig** – used as a school.

**Drumtochty** – housed Norwegian refugees (owned by the King of Norway).

**Duncraig** - served as a naval hospital

**Dundas:** The Forth Bridge Balloon Barrage, as it was called, needed a Headquarters nearby and the position of the Castle with its commanding views over the Forth Bridge and along the river itself made the Castle a natural place for this purpose

**Eliock, Sanquhar** – requisitioned for Polish troops in WW2; in 1940 they set the N wing on fire

**Feterresso** – used for ‘military purposes’

**Hoddam** – requisitioned throughout the War

**Johnstone castle** - taken over by the War Office and a prisoner-of-war camp set up in the grounds.

**Knockderry Castle** - convalescent home for wounded French soldiers; visited by De Gaulle

**Lews Castle** - requisitioned by the Admiralty and was used as a naval hospital and accommodation for air and ground crew of 700 Naval Air Squadron, The base was referred to as HMS Mentor.

**Leys Castle** - requisitioned as a military hospital; the family only moved back in 1958, after a restoration programme.

**Lochnaw Castle** - used as an RAF hospital during WW2.

**Merchiston** – used by National Fire Service.

**Myres** – housed Polish troops.

**Taymouth** - requisitioned as a nursing home for Polish soldiers and then became the headquarters for civil defence training in Scotland.

**Castle Toward** - used as a combined operations centre (COC No. 2), HMS Brontosaurus.

**Tulliallan** –used by the Free Polish Army as their headquarters in Scotland.

**Tullichewan** – the WRNS and naval personnel requisitioned it early on in the War. Latterly the castle was used as accommodation for workers at the Torpedo factory. It was destroyed in 1954

#### **Appendix 4 Rebuilding projects excluded from the statistics in Appendix 1**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Auchenbowie	dilapidated but not derelict
Balnagowan	dilapidated but not derelict
Cleish	dilapidated but not derelict
Coxton Tower	not reinhabited
Davidston House	dilapidated but not derelict
Dollarbeg	dilapidated but not derelict
Dowies	dilapidated but not derelict
Drumlanrig's Tower	dilapidated but not derelict
Ethie	dilapidated but not derelict
Farnell	dilapidated but not derelict
Fetteresso	dilapidated but not derelict
Hills	dilapidated but not derelict
Inchdrewer	not finished
Johnstone	not finished
Lanton	dilapidated but not derelict
Leny House	dilapidated but not derelict
Logie Elphinstone	dilapidated but not derelict
Melville Castle	dilapidated but not derelict
Midhope	not reinhabited
Pitheavlis	dilapidated but not derelict

**Appendix 5 Castles sold after restoration\***

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date sold</b>
Abbot's Tower	1989
Ballencrieff	2006
Breeze's Tower	2003
Carnousie	1985
Castle Levan	1995
Couston Castle	2001
Craigcaffie	1998
Duncraig	2009
Edinample	1992
Fawside	1988
Fordell	1995
Fordyce	2008 (for sale)**
Formakin	2006
Forter	2007 (for sale)**
Garth	1993
Gilnockie	1992
Hatton	1988
House of Aldie	?
Knockbrex	2004
Law Castle	2002
Leslie Castle	1998
Liberton House	2010
Mains	1998
Midmar	2008 (for sale)**
Newmilns	2003
Niddrie	1999
Ochiltree	1985
Peffermill House	1993
Pitcullo	1977
Powrie	1985
Ravenstone	2000
Spedlins	1988
Tillycairn	?
Terpersie	1992

\*N.B. most of the above were sold several years after the restoration

\*\* It is not known whether these houses were sold or not, only that they were on the market

## Appendix 6 Scottish Castles which offer accommodation (sc = self-catering)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Type</b>
<b>Airth</b>	Falkirk	hotel; weddings
<b>Ackergill</b>	nr Wick	weddings, catered groups
<b>Airlie</b>	Angus	sc
<b>Aldourie</b>	Inverness-shire	catered groups
<b>Amhuinnsuidhe</b>	Western Isles	catered groups; weddings
<b>Ardgowan</b>	nr Glasgow	private club for golfers; catered groups
<b>Ardkinglas House</b>	Argyll	weddings; sc
<b>Ardoe House Hotel</b>	Aberdeenshire	hotel; weddings
<b>Ardverikie</b>	Highland	weddings; corporate events
<b>Auchen</b>	nr Moffat	hotel; weddings
<b>Ayton Castle</b>	Berwickshire	catered groups; weddings
<b>Baledmund Castle</b>	Pitlochry	sc
<b>Balflugh</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc
<b>Balfour</b>	Orkney	hotel; weddings
<b>Balgonie</b>	Fife	weddings from 1989
<b>Bamff Castle</b>	Perthshire	sc
<b>Barcaldine</b>	nr Oban	b&b; weddings
<b>Bardrochat House</b>	Ayrshire	catered groups
<b>Barholm</b>	D&G	sc
<b>Barns Tower</b>	Peebles	sc (Vivat Trust)
<b>Barony Castle</b>	Borders	hotel; weddings
<b>Blackcraig</b>	Perthshire	b&b; watercolour classes
<b>Blair Castle</b>	Ayrshire	catered groups; weddings
<b>Blair Castle</b>	Perthshire	weddings
<b>Birkhill</b>	Fife	catered groups; weddings
<b>Birse</b>	Kincardineshire	catered groups
<b>Blairquhan</b>	Ayrshire	catered groups; weddings
<b>Borthwick</b>	nr Edinburgh	hotel; weddings
<b>Boturich</b>	Dumbartonshire	sc
<b>Brechin</b>	Angus	catered groups (shooting)
<b>Brodie Castle</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc; owned by NTS
<b>Broomhall</b>	nr Stirling	hotel; weddings
<b>Bunchrew House</b>	Inverness-shire	hotel; weddings
<b>Busta House</b>	Shetland	hotel; weddings
<b>Calgary</b>	Mull	sc; weddings
<b>Cameron House</b>	Dunbartonshire	hotel; weddings
<b>Carberry Tower</b>	East Lothian	b&b; conferences
<b>Carbisdale</b>	Sutherland	youth hostel
<b>Carnell</b>	Ayrshire	catered groups; weddings
<b>Carriden House</b>	West Lothian	b&b; weddings
<b>Castle Forbes</b>	Aberdeenshire	guest house
<b>Castle Fraser</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc; National Trust
<b>Castle Lachlan</b>	Argyll	sc; weddings
<b>Castle of Invercauld</b>	Aberdeenshire	catered groups
<b>Castle of Park</b>	Aberdeenshire	catered groups; weddings
<b>Castle of Park</b>	Wigtownshire	sc (Landmark Trust)
<b>Comlongon</b>	nr Annan	Hotel, weddings
<b>Cortachy Castle</b>	Angus	weddings



<b>Craighall</b>	Perthshire	sc
<b>Craigrownie</b>	Argyll	sc; weddings
<b>Cringletie House</b>	Borders	hotel; weddings
<b>Culcreuch</b>	nr Stirling	hotel; weddings
<b>Culzean</b>	Ayrshire	Hotel; sc
<b>Dairsie</b>	Fife	sc, b&b, weddings
<b>Dalcross</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc since 1996; weddings
<b>Dalhousie</b>	nr Edinburgh	hotel; weddings
<b>Dalmunzie</b>	Perthshire	hotel; weddings
<b>Dalnaglar</b>	Perthshire	catered groups; weddings
<b>Delgatie</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc; weddings
<b>Dornoch</b>	Dornoch	hotel; weddings
<b>Drummuir Castle</b>	Aberdeenshire	for Diageo group only
<b>Drumtochty</b>	Aberdeenshire	catered groups; weddings
<b>Duart Castle</b>	Mull	weddings
<b>Duncraig Castle</b>	Ross-shire	weddings;b&b
<b>Dunans</b>	Argyll	was a hotel; burned down in 2001
<b>Dundas</b>	Midlothian	catered groups; weddings
<b>Duns</b>	Borders	hotel; weddings
<b>Dupplin Castle</b>	nr Perth	b&b
<b>Easterheughs</b>	Fife	sc
<b>Erchless Castle</b>	Inverness-shire	sc; catered groups
<b>Ethie</b>	Arbroath	b&b; catered groups
<b>Fasque</b>	Kincardineshire	weddings; sc
<b>Fenton</b>	near Edinburgh	catered groups
<b>Fernie Castle</b>	Fife	hotel; weddings
<b>Finavon</b>	Angus	sc
<b>Fingask</b>	Perthshire	weddings; sc
<b>Fordyce</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc
<b>Forter</b>	Perthshire	sc, weddings
<b>Foulis</b>	Ross-shire	sc
<b>Friars Carse</b>	Dumfriesshire	hotel
<b>Fyvie</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc - National Trust
<b>Glenapp</b>	Ayrshire	hotel; weddings
<b>Glenborrodale</b>	Inverness-shire	sc; weddings; corporate events
<b>Glengarry</b>	Loch Ness	hotel
<b>Glengorm</b>	Mull	b&b; sc; weddings
<b>Glenskirlie</b>	Stirlingshire	hotel; weddings
<b>Guthrie</b>	Angus, nr Dundee	weddings, catered groups
<b>Hallbar</b>	Renfrewshire	sc
<b>Harthill</b>	Aberdeenshire	catered groups
<b>Hatton</b>	Aberdeenshire	b&b, catered groups
<b>Houston House</b>	West Lothian	hotel
<b>Inchrie</b>	Perthshire	hotel
<b>Innes House</b>	Moray	weddings, corporate events
<b>Invercauld</b>	Aberdeenshire	weddings, catered groups
<b>Inverlochy</b>	nr Fort William	hotel; weddings
<b>Kelburn</b>	Ayrshire	b&b; weddings
<b>Kilconquhar</b>	Fife	sc; restaurant; timeshare; weddings
<b>Kildrummy</b>	Aberdeenshire	hotel; weddings?
<b>Kilravock</b>	nr Inverness	b&b; sc; weddings

<b>Kincardine</b>	Royal Deeside	catered groups
<b>Kinnaird</b>	Angus	sc; catered groups
<b>Kinnairdy</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc
<b>Kirkconnell Tower</b>	Dumfriesshire	sc
<b>Knockbrenn</b>	D&G	sc; weddings
<b>Lachlan</b>	Argyll	sc; weddings
<b>Law</b>	Ayrshire	sc; weddings
<b>Lennoxlove</b>	nr Edinburgh	weddings, corporate events
<b>Leny House</b>	Perthshire	sc and b&b
<b>Leslie Castle</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc
<b>Lethendy</b>	Perthshire	catered groups
<b>Levan</b>	Gourock, Renfrewshire	b&b
<b>Liberton Tower</b>	Edinburgh	sc
<b>Lickleyhead</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc
<b>Logie Elphinstone House</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc; weddings
<b>Mansfield</b>	Tain, Highlands	hotel; weddings
<b>Melville</b>	Edinburgh	hotel; weddings
<b>Mellerstain</b>	Borders	weddings
<b>Menstrie</b>	Clackmannanshire	sc
<b>Minard</b>	Argyll	b&b, sc, weddings
<b>Muckrach</b>	Moray	sc
<b>Myres</b>	Fife	weddings, catered groups
<b>Northfield House</b>	East Lothian	sc
<b>Peffermill House</b>	Edinburgh	sc apartment
<b>Pittfichie</b>	Aberdeenshire	sc and weddings
<b>Pittfour</b>	Perthshire	sc
<b>Pittodrie House</b>	Aberdeenshire	hotel; weddings
<b>Plane</b>	Stirlingshire	sc; weddings
<b>Ross Priory</b>	Loch Lomond	hotel; weddings
<b>Rossie Priory</b>	Perthshire	catered groups
<b>Rumgally House</b>	Fife	b&b
<b>Saddell Castle</b>	Kintyre	sc (Landmark Trust)
<b>Sherbrook</b>	Glasgow	hotel
<b>Shieldhill</b>	D&G	hotel; weddings
<b>Skelmorlie</b>	Ayrshire	sc; weddings
<b>Sorn Castle</b>	Ayrshire	shooting packages
<b>Stobo</b>	Borders	hotel
<b>Stonefield</b>	Argyll	hotel; weddings
<b>Stravithie</b>	St Andrews	b&b
<b>Stuart</b>	Inverness-shire	hotel, catered groups; weddings
<b>Sundrum</b>	Ayrshire	sc
<b>Teaninich</b>	Ross-shire	catered groups; weddings; b&b
<b>Tower of Glenstrae</b>	Argyll	b&b
<b>Traquair</b>	Borders	b&b; weddings
<b>Torrisdale</b>	Argyll	sc
<b>Tullibole</b>	Kinross-shire	b&b
<b>Tulloch</b>	Dingwall	hotel; weddings
<b>Venlaw</b>	Borders	hotel; weddings
<b>Wedderburn</b>	Borders	hotel, weddings
<b>Winton House</b>	near Edinburgh	hotel, weddings, sc, catered groups

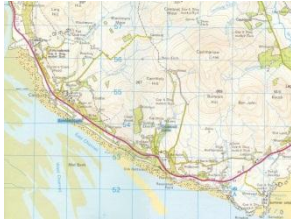
## Appendix 7      New castles built since 1945

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Other information</b>
Balfour Tower	Aberdeenshire	recent	Rasmussen architects
Balmuir	Aberdeenshire	recent	Rasmussen architects
Balquhiddar	Renfrewshire	recent	?
Brockloch	Ayrshire	2004-5	retired policeman
Castle Dhu	Borders	1998 - 2000	Crichton Wood, architect
Corrour Lodge	Highlands	1999-2003	Joseph and Lisbet Koerner
Not known	Highlands	2001 - 2004	Cameron Mckintosh
Easterheughs	Fife	1946 - ?	Thomas & Rhodes self-build
Glenskirlie	Stirlingshire	2000-7	purpose built hotel
Maryfield	D&G	1990s?	Kit Rigg, architect
Issueburn	Aberdeenshire	2003-9	stonemason
Ravenscraig	Plockton	early 1990s	Ian Begg
Salenside Tower	Borders	early 1990s	built on side of small house
Strathieburn	Aberdeenshire	1985 - ?	built by an architect
Woodhouselee	Perthshire	1993-4	Neil & Carolyn McLauchlan

## Appendix 8 Articles about Barholm

### 1. First person narrative<sup>695</sup>

Unlike many of those who purchase a castle, we did not trawl Scotland's ruined castles looking for



one to restore. We simply fell in love with Barholm Castle the moment we saw it. In July 1997 we had been holidaying at Portpatrick on the Mull of Galloway and were on our way to stay with family in Dumfries. We had started out the drive with no thought of buying anything more than a lunchtime sandwich, when we saw the 'Castle for Sale' sign on the A75. We took out the ordnance survey map and looked. Barholm

Castle (ruin) was marked, about a mile up a minor road off the A75, towards the 6000 year old megalithic burial stones of Cairn Holy. 'If we don't go back and look now, we never will,' I said.

We turned the car round and went to search for the castle. At the end of a very steep, winding and narrow B road, we turned into a farmyard and there, right in front of us, was the stunning ruin of a 400 year old tower, high above the Solway Firth, with fantastic views across Wigtown Bay and as far as the Isle of Man. We fell in love with it instantly. The walls were still standing, but there was no roof, and trees were growing out of huge cracks in the walls and on the parapet. To our besotted eyes, this only added to its charm.



During the previous 25 years had visited almost every ruined castle in the south of Scotland, where we were both brought up, and many across Europe. We had also enviously eyed up a number of restored properties and fantasised – as one does – about living in one ourselves. To fuel this particular fantasy, we decided to look in at the estate agents handling the sale in Dumfries, just to find out the price. Barholm Castle was priced at a bargain £65,000. How could we turn it down when it seemed to be meant for us to restore? We didn't – although had we known that costs would escalate to more than 12 times the purchase price and that it would be two years before the sale would be complete, five years before there was even the prospect of being able to start any restoration work, six years before work would actually begin and nine years before it was finished, we certainly would have baulked.

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<sup>695</sup> Janet Inglis 'The Re-building of Barholm Castle' **Scottish Castles Association Journal** Issue 13, 2006, 44-47; online at [http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/rec.php?id=90&cat\\_id=1&highlight=2](http://www.scottishcastlesassociation.com/rec.php?id=90&cat_id=1&highlight=2)

### Viewing and purchase

The first thing we needed to do with some urgency was to make a viewing appointment with the owner. This was before the days of mobile telephones; whenever we phoned his house there was no reply and nor was there an answering machine. At the last moment before we were due to

return to our home in Holland, we managed to get hold of him and arrange an appointment to look round inside. We picked up the key from his house close to the castle, and with that visit we



sealed our decision. Chilly and dark, even in the August sunshine, the castle interior had a gloomy, romantic attraction and we could see the scope for a fantastic adventure in restoring it. Grass grew on the great hall floor and ivy with stems the thickness of tree trunks covered the walls. There were owl pellets scattered around, which we later discovered came from a resident

barn owl, who frightened us once or twice swooping silently down from the parapet. Through the empty windows we could see the sea way below, across the fields. Up above, fireplaces hung on the walls with no hearths and no floors to reach them. We could see the entrances to what must be garderobes in the corners, but there was no way of reaching them or seeing inside. The spiral staircase was complete to the top, although dodgy in places, and we were able to climb up to the first floor corridor and look out across what would be the master bedroom and down the void to the great hall floor, which was the vaulted storeroom ceiling. We could look up to the sky and see the wall walks and the garret rooms, and had we been brave enough, we could have climbed right up the tiny turret staircase and clambered onto the caphouse roof to look at the fantastic views.

As soon as we put in an offer for the castle, which we did almost immediately, we started looking for knowledgeable people to talk to about restoration. We commissioned the well-known Scottish conservation architect, Ian Begg to make a visit and write an informal feasibility study for us. He was enthusiastic about Barholm and upbeat about the possibility of restoring it, which gave us great hope. However, he warned that we would need 'plenty of money' and to spend at least £200,000 on building costs. In 1997 this was a fortune! Could we manage it? We were awed by the thought of finding and spending so much money. Since then, of course, costs have more than trebled. Two things have saved us – one is that the value of our house in Holland has also trebled since we bought it, and the other is the generous grant aid which we have received from Historic Scotland. Without it, this would not have been feasible.

### Directing operations from overseas

Although we are both from the south west of Scotland, and still have family there, we have lived overseas for many years, so we had to deal with a battery of solicitors, archaeologists, architects, engineers, surveyors and civil servants from a base in The Netherlands, rather than face to face. E-mails and competitive telephone rates made communication bearable, although for the first few years not every firm seemed able to cope with the high-tech demands of e-mailing. As we entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century, more small Scottish firms began to accept the use of technology in communications, thankfully.

Throughout the restoration, I steadfastly denied that we were at any disadvantage being overseas, although with honest hindsight I have to admit that life would have been so much easier if we had been on hand. But the only way we could finance such a project on public service salaries was because we live overseas. I had e-mail and telephone communication with the architect and others on an almost daily basis and we went across to Scotland every 8 weeks or so once work had started. I suppose that we were no different from those brave people in Britain who decide to renovate a dilapidated hill farm in Tuscany or a chateau in Burgundy at a distance. Indeed, we were at the advantage of working within a familiar system, in our own language and within our own culture, although there was much we did not know about building contracts. Everything we did was a leap of faith and we were on a steep learning curve the whole time.

Often, on our visits, there was disappointingly little progress to be seen. If we had been there on a weekly, or even daily basis, the frustration of seeing little day to day movement might have been unbearable, and I'm not convinced that there is anything which we could have done or said which would have made any difference. The architects who acted as project managers were on the case, chasing things up at every opportunity and visiting site on a formal basis every two weeks. However, as our bi-monthly visits approached, the anticipation would build up and become overwhelming. We lead busy lives in Holland, with lots of responsibilities and activities to talk about. But when a visit to Scotland approached, all of our conversational openers were uniform: "When we get to Barholm....."

The past 9 years did not go smoothly. The two greatest virtues for anyone restoring a ruinous building are patience and tenacity, and I suppose we have at least demonstrated the latter. A bottomless purse would be a major asset, too. We didn't have one, and the main leitmotiv of our troubles was for the first few years financial. Unexpected expenses would pop up like bad pennies, throwing us into a state of panic. The exchange rate of the pound and the euro (previously the guilder – we started so long ago) became of obsessive interest to us. Its peaks and troughs could plunge us into the depths of despair or up into a cautious degree of euphoria. Our house in Holland is still mortgaged to a frightening degree. Thanks to prudent housekeeping on the part of the quantity surveyor the basic costs of the project were kept more or less within budget, although the final costs have not yet been quantified. They are likely to be something over £800,000.

The other theme which has dogged us has been time. The project over-ran by nearly a year and a half, almost doubling the 18 months it was supposed to take. This caused us not only impatience, but financial worries, as professional fees mounted well beyond the projected amount and our expected letting income failed to materialise. Eighteen months was perhaps optimistic, although not unreasonably so, as we were assured after every site meeting that things were running to schedule. Towards the end of the project, when we had already struggled with a year's overrun, we found the many things which still did not go to plan extremely tiresome. I began to run out of steam. Earlier in the project, I would frequently fire off lengthy letters with umpteen points of complaint, laying out exactly what was wrong and precisely how I wanted it put right. I was fuelled by righteous indignation, which gave me the energy to keep making sure things were right.

By the end, however, some days I barely had the energy to make a brief phone call to rearrange delivery times because some idiot had mucked up when and where something would arrive, which seemed to happen on a weekly basis. I suppose the idiots in question were lucky to escape the sharp end of my tongue; I was just too weary to engage with them. I did summon up the demons of angry energy every so often and keep the letters churning out, but each one took a lot of effort.

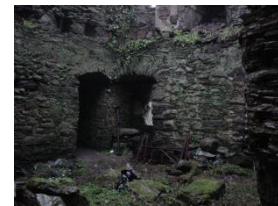
One of the highest hills in Galloway is Criffel, which dominates the landscape all around Dumfries. We have climbed it several times, and, just like Everest (admittedly, Criffel is a little lower), it has a series of false summits, where the hapless climber is lulled into a sense of security by a ridge which appears to be just short of the top, but in fact is still some distance off. The disappointment of realization is terrible, like the disappointments we felt, over and over again, as the project seemed to be almost finished, but never was. However, finally it is complete and we can begin to treat the building like a home.

### **Would we do it again?**

Almost certainly not, had we known in advance just how long and hard the path would be. I like to joke that now that the castle is no longer ruined, we are ruined instead. That's financially **and** emotionally. I find it hard now to recapture that sense of adventure and fun which we felt in 1997; the years that followed were filled with so many disappointments, difficulties and anxieties. It is customary, in accounts such as ours, to claim breezily to have had great fun during the restoration and to have enjoyed every minute. We certainly did not. We are both experienced in managing difficult projects and juggling many complex activities, but the difficulties of restoring Barholm Castle almost defeated us at times and we have come out of the project feeling bruised and battered.

### **Do we regret it?**

No, not at all – regrets are always foolish and we have a beautiful home which has exceeded our expectations. Looking at the photographs of the grey ruins it is very hard to imagine how we thought it would look when finished. I don't think we ever had a really clear vision of the finished product, just an idea that an amazing transformation could be



made and inspiration from the restored castles we had visited. When we had a small New Year party after the restoration was nearly finished, my uncle looked at the photographs of the original state of the building and asked, "How did you know it would look like this when it was finished?" 'This' was the great hall with rugs on the slate floor, a painted ceiling, comfortable seating, embroidered curtains and a bookcase full of local books. "We didn't," I said. "It just happened." The furnishings make the castle look like a home, but they were the icing on the cake, the much anticipated, pleasurable part of the restoration. Compared to the years of hard work organizing and administering the project and the craftsmanship involved in the rebuilding of the south wall, the restoration of the fireplace, the

making of authentic windows, the stabilizing of the floor, the placement and painting of the



ceiling beams and the installation of heating and lighting systems, the contribution of carpets, cushions and curtains was quite minor in the grand scheme of things. We did put a great deal of time and effort into choosing them, however, and they did make a significant difference between an empty building and a home. Finally, we think our building looks beautiful now, both inside and out. For more

information on the project, see our website [www.barholm.net](http://www.barholm.net)

## 2. Magazine article<sup>696</sup>

“This project has been a risk from start to finish,” states Janet Inglis. “It was a risk when we bought it, it was a risk to know if we’d be allowed to do the project, a risk if we’d get a grant and there was the risk the wall would fall down!”

Plenty risk and an abundance of stress but fortunately Janet and her husband John Brennan had courage in their convictions when they bought Barholm Castle near Gatehouse of Fleet in 1999. It’s been a long process but when the couple retire here next year it will all have been worth it. Janet and John first spotted the ivy-covered ruin in 1997. Although living in Holland – Janet was a psychologist and John works for the European Patent Office in The Hague - the couple regularly returned home to visit family and friends.

“Although the castle was on the market, the owner didn’t really want to sell so there were a number of restrictive conditions attached to the sale which we just couldn’t agree to,” John recalls. “It wasn’t until 1999 that we finally came to an agreement.”

Over these two years, the couple did their homework and spoke to Historic Scotland. “Castles were always a favourite visiting place and we’d seen the renovation of Rusco so we knew that it was possible to renovate this type of property and live in it,” says Janet. “However the first big risk was that Historic Scotland wouldn’t commit to a grant until we actually owned the property. So we bought the castle not knowing if there would be any funding to help with the renovation.”

Considering the scale of the renovation this was indeed a leap in the dark. “We think the castle was built in 1575 but what it actually looked like we don’t know as we only have map evidence,” John explains. “It was depicted on a map as being in ruins in 1780 so if this is the case it had been open to the elements for over 200 years.”

When John and Janet took it on, the stonework was saturated and there was a large crack down the fireplace wall which was also bulging out and at risk of falling down. The ground floor was bedrock and the floor above (the Great Hall) was covered in ferns and nettles. Although the

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<sup>696</sup> Nichola Hunter ‘Risky Business’ **Dumfries and Galloway Life** October 2010, 64-7



staircase was intact to the top of the property there was no roof and no floor on the two upper levels. To get things started the couple bought a digital camera and started putting together a portfolio for their Historic Scotland grant application. It took four years to get the paperwork and planning in place and in 2003 the renovation finally started.

“The building has dictated what we’ve done,” says Janet. “You imagine when you take on a large restoration project that you’ll have plenty of choices but when it’s a monument and Grade A listed you don’t really have any choice at all. Historic Scotland won’t allow anything speculative; it all has to be evidence-based. However, they did allocate us a generous grant and part of the reason for that was because the castle was intact to roof height although one side of the shell did end up coming down and being rebuilt. It’s also why we’ve had the exterior harled as there was evidence that it had been harled previously.”

Internally there have been a few changes to the layout but essentially the footprint has remained the same. On the ground floor which would have been used as a storage area or even for cattle, the couple have installed a large kitchen and WC. On the next floor is the Great Hall with its stunning painted ceiling created by artist Jennifer Merrydew. Above is the master bedroom along with an incredibly spacious Jack and Jill en suite. The en suite would previously have been another bedroom although the original and very small toilet has been retained as a feature in the alcove.

On the third floor which was originally one large room are a further two bedrooms, a shower room and access to the wall walk where you can peer over the front door and throw things at visitors you don’t like the look of! Finally, on the top floor, as with all castles in Scotland is the historical bedroom where a figure from history has reputedly stayed. In Barholm’s case it’s John Knox although in this instance it’s quite probable. The staircase continues to the roof where John has had a new chimney and cap house built. “We couldn’t find any evidence of how high the cap house would be but we do know there was one here before, so we have been allowed to replace it and the views from here are magnificent.”

Actually, the views from Barholm are magnificent all around. “The views are what really sold it to us,” says John. “When you actually start researching castles and their locations, this one is really quite special having such an elevated but secluded position looking out to sea.”

In 2005 the renovation was finally complete but almost at the risk of Janet’s sanity as she explains wryly: “I did the majority of the management of builders and architects as John was working between The Hague and the university. When I look back I don’t know how I did it. Our daughter Rose (who is now nearly 18) was quite young, I was teaching psychology, I was doing psychology - it wasn’t fun. We went through three architects and at one point I identified that we had had 50 different tradesmen on site – it was a huge undertaking. It was very stressful for a long, long time but it has been worth it.”

“One of the best bits was when we got to walk over the first floor,” Janet remembers. “We’d looked over at the corner so many times but not known precisely what was there and then we

discovered the guard robe.” John continues: “It was the same when we climbed to the top of the staircase you could see a fireplace above your head but that didn’t become John Knox’s room until the floor went in and you could walk through a door. It was fascinating watching it change from a shell to a house.”

Now that the renovation is complete the couple are looking forward to retiring to the property and making it their family home next year. However, they still have a few things to keep them occupied. “What we’ve busy with now is the garden as we want to make that something quite special,” says Janet. John continues: “We’ve been working on it since 2000 when it was head high with thistles and hogweed. We have two friends who are bikers who came down in their leathers and pushed a path through for us to the gate at the end of the garden and since then every time we’ve visited we’ve cleared an 8 x 8 foot patch and expanded it very gradually. Progressively over the 10 years it’s become a garden.”

“The garden is a nice project,” says Janet. “During the renovation the house has almost been out of our control whereas the garden is completely within it and there’s no risk!”